

THOUGHTS ON
BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

Being the SUBSTANCE of

TWO SERMONS,

Preached in

D U B L I N,

AT THE

Adminiftration of the ORDINANCE.

A N D

Published at the Request of Many.

With an APPENDIX, containing a brief Account
of the AUTHOR's first Convictions, refpecting
the Invalidity of INFANT BAPTISM.

—*And Philip faid, if thou believ'ft with all thine Heart,
thou may'ft.* Acts viii. 37.

By JAMES RUTHERFORD.

D U B L I N :

Printed by S. POWELL, in Crane-lane.

MDCCCLVIII.

47.
9-13.
= 604.



P R E F A C E.



WHATEVER is published to the World must undergo the *Test* and *Censure* of every Person into whose Hands it may fall; and, amongst a Variety of Readers, will probably meet with more to carp and cavil, than impartially examine and candidly reply. On that Account, I am sensible, publick Pieces should be well digested, and carefully compared with *the Pattern shewed in the Mount*, lest the Cause pleaded suffer thro' Inadvertence, and the Performance be rejected with Contempt.

I dare not affirm that the following Essay is every way equal to the Subject; nor have I the Vanity to believe that this Performance will appear, in all Respects, free from Fault before the discerning Eyes of a knowing World; yet chearfully give it up at the Request of my Friends, to all impartial and judicious Men; and am willing it should be freely examined, and fully tried by the unerring Standard of divine Revelation: And as a strict Agreement with that sacred Rule has been my sedulous Aim, if I have happily succeeded, shall be under little Concern how far it may please an officious Critic, or gratify a censorious Taste.

I humbly acknowledge, the following Pages are wrote rather in a loose than laco-

P R E F A C E.

nic Stile; but as the latter is not my Talent, and Controversy seems to require a free manner of writing, hope to be favourably indulged in this Foible. It is also possible, in some Cases, I have been too *dogmatic*, to the Prejudice of that Modesty and Charity which is most becoming; yet think I have avoided a *satyric Rudeness*, which is too common in Controversy.

As I never write my *Sermons* previous to preaching, those who heard me deliver these *Discourses*, are not to expect what is *now* published will exactly correspond in *Phraseology* with what was *then* deliver'd: It is enough they agree in Substance, which those who heard them will easily observe. But as every one is at full Liberty to support his Sentiments in the best Manner he can, have on that Account, made free to add, alter, or diminish, as Prudence directed or Matters occurred, which I apprehended would any way enliven the Subject, or had a natural Tendency to defend the Truth.

After all, it would be vain to imagine this *Publication* will escape a Current of Opposition from different Quarters; and equally presumptuous to determine the Nature or Number of such Objections as may be advanced, by Men of contrary Sentiments, shall therefore make no farther *Apology*, but conclude with this *Request*,—That the Performance be not rejected, *merely on account of the Subject*, nor dismissed without an unprejudic'd Perusal.

S E R-



SERMON I.

ACTS viii. 12.

But when they believed Philip, preaching the Things concerning the Kingdom of GOD, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both Men and Women.



CONTROVERSY is a Subject so difficult and delicate, that it should be entered upon with the utmost Caution, and treated with the greatest Tenderness; especially when our Debates turn upon Things relative to GOD, and the Affairs of his Kingdom.

I am satisfied, the Propriety and Importance of this Remark will appear to all who consider the Weight of Truth, and the Weakness of Man. It is an easy Matter to enter into Dispute, to set an Argument, and conclude we have gained a Triumph; but it is probable, in the midst of such fancied Satisfaction, the Merits of the Cause may be overlooked, and what is advanced rather tend to obscure than clear the Subject. As I am
now

THOUGHTS on

now embarking in a solemn Enterprize, choose to propose a *Maxim* for the Regulation of my Spirit, and a *Rule* for the managing my Argument; namely, that
 Jam.iii.13. the *Whole* be conducted in the *Meekness of Wisdom*, and
 Jer. xxvi. every *Part* supported with, *Thus saith the LORD*. For
 2. it would be exceeding preposterous to plead the Cause of
 CHRIST with an *angry Spirit*, or determine Points of
 Faith with *the Words of Men*.

Soon after the *Votaries* of Christianity became numerous, Difference in Principle and Degeneracy in Practice began to prevail; and these frequently occasioned a Number of Disputes, which not being managed with
 Jam.iii.17. *the Wisdom that is from above*, were attended with many Evils. At length, the Multitude of Professors, far from *Uniformity in Judgment*, and more distant still from *Unity of Spirit*, by dividing and subdividing, crowded the World with different Sentiments and Parties; and at present *Seets* are so numerous, and their Differences in Judgment so considerable, a serious Enquirer is much at a Loss what Principles to *choose*, or in what Community to *fix*. But as we are favoured with Liberty of Conscience, to enquire for Truth, and declare our Minds, let no Man be daunted with Opposition, nor discouraged with Difficulty. For if we *search the Scriptures*, in a diligent and conscientious Manner, we shall
 Joh. v. 39. find the Testimony clear and full; and if we earnestly
 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. entreat the Direction of Heaven, we shall *hear the Shepherd's Voice*, and *be led in the Footsteps of the*
 Joh. x. 27. *Flock*.

Song i. 7,
 8.

Among a Variety of Subjects that have occasioned our *Polemical* Contests, the Ordinance before us is one; respecting which, I shall just observe, that did I not regard Believers Baptism as a solid and important Truth, should not appear in its Defence; and had I no Ground to hope for a divine Blessing to attend my Endeavours, should not engage in the Controversy. But having maturely *considered of it, and taken Advice, shall now speak*
 Judg. xix. 30. *my Mind*.

At present I design to wave the Argument with *those* who deny the Validity of *Water Baptism*, and chiefly

concern

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

3

concern myself with *such* who differ only about the Subject, Mode, and Intent, but are strictly agreed with respect to the Solemnity and Duration of the Ordinance.

The greater Number of our present Professors look upon *Infants* to be the proper Subjects of Baptism, tho' they are divided among themselves; some being of Opinion, that the Children of Believers *only* should be admitted; while others as positively assert, that all Children have an *equal* Right, as there can be no Difference in the Infants themselves, whether they descend from believing or unbelieving Parents; but there are others full as zealous for the Doctrine and Practice of Baptism, who constantly insist, that all *Infants* are entirely without a Title, and, in their Esteem, *no Person* is a proper Subject, till blessed with divine Faith, and capable of *bringing forth Fruits worthy of Repentance*. Among the Luke iii. 8. last of these I am numbered, and at this Time called upon to give a Reason of the Hope that is in me respecting that Point; and in order to do it in the most unexceptionable Manner, invite you to a strict Survey of the *Oracles of GOD*, they being the only *Rule* by which I 1 Pet. iv. regulate my Ministry, and the great *Ballance* of the 11. Sanctuary, where all Articles of Faith must be weighed.

That our *Text* is pertinent to the Purpose, effectually supports the Authority, and emphatically urges the Practice of *Baptism*, seems evident. *Philip* was called by Grace, chosen by the Church, and had his Commission from Heaven, which proves the Authority of what he administers.—The Converts, both Men and Women, cheerfully comply, though the Persecution was so hot at *Jerusalem* that inspired Men were obliged to disperse:—The Prejudices of the *Samaritans* against the *Jews* were so implacable, that nothing but divine Power could remove them:—And the Cords of Delusion so strong, that nothing but the Love of JESUS could draw from the Sorcery of *Simon*, and lead to an Ordinance of GOD. But neither a furious *Persecution* could frighten, the brazen Bars of *Prejudice* prevent, nor the strong Fetters of bewitching *Sorcery* detain these captive Slaves; for GOD having loved them with an *everlasting Love*, and now Jer. xxxi. drawn them with *Loving Kindness*, they resolve with 3. Courage

THOUGHTS on

Courage to forsake all—face all—and break through all, to follow the Captain of SALVATION, and pursue the Things of GOD. This they declared by their Faith and Repentance, testified by their Submission to Baptism, and probably confirmed by a steadfast Continuance in Doctrine, Fellowship, and Prayer. So mightily grew the Word of GOD, and prevailed!

Acts ii. 42.

Acts xix.
20.Acts viii.
6.Acts xvii.
11.

But to come to the Point: I shall make free to request two Favours of this numerous Auditory, namely, the generous Attention of the *Samaritans—in giving Heed with one accord to the Things that shall be spoken*; and the celebrated Conduct of the more noble *Bereans—in searching the Scriptures, whether those Things be so*. Then, in Hopes of your candid Compliance with these Requests, and with a fixed Eye on GOD for Assistance, an humble Desire for his Blessing, and a sincere Attempt to produce every Thing agreeable to the Scriptures, shall proceed to treat the *Text and Subject* in the following Manner.

- I. To point out what I judge necessary to be believed concerning the Kingdom of GOD, previous to Baptism.
- II. Produce what I think proper to be received concerning the Name of JESUS CHRIST, antecedent to the same Ordinance.
- III. Advance some Reasons, why I cannot admit any to be proper Subjects of Baptism, but such who have Faith concerning the Things of GOD's Kingdom, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST, and are capable of making a personal Profession.

These Matters demand the most serious Attention; for unless we are acquainted with the Affairs of the Kingdom, we cannot be regular Subjects; and while we are Strangers to the Titles and Peculiarities of the King's Name, we continue in Suspense about the Honour and Respect due to our Sovereign; consequently, in all Acts of Obedience, unavoidably worship we know not what.

Besides,

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

5

Besides, if not distinctly informed of the King's Pleasure, we are liable to commit the greatest Mistakes, and subject to the severest Reproaches: For we must either be branded on the *one* Hand with the opprobrious Character of Ignorance, in Matters which, from the Beginning, have been openly promulged; or, on the *other*, be stigmatized with the hateful Censure of Will-worshippers, in Points about which our Master's Mind is full and plain. These Things duly considered, should make us strictly diligent in searching after Truth; nicely cautious what we admit as Articles of Faith; and exact in complying with all our Convictions.—But whether my Attempts at this Time shall be so pertinent and prudent, so candid and conclusive, and so solid and scriptural, as to engage that Attention I am willing to hope they deserve, must be left to the Judgment of the Impartial; and so shall proceed,

- I. To point out what I judge necessary to be believed, concerning the Kingdom of GOD, previous to Baptism.

By the Kingdom of GOD, in this Subject, I understand the Gospel Dispensation, established in the World by the MESSIAH, ushered in with the Doctrine of Repentance, and attended with the welcome Proclamation, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* This Proclamation Matt. iii. 2. cannot with Propriety be referred to any other *Oeconomy* than the Gospel Dispensation, in Contradistinction to the *Mosaic State*: For the Kingdom of Grace began in Paradise, and the Kingdom of Glory was not yet at hand. Allowing it therefore in this Light, two Things apparently comprehend all that is necessary to be believed concerning the Kingdom, previous to Baptism.

1. *The Purity of the Kingdom.*

2. *It's Perpetuity.*

And, 1. with Regard to the *Purity* or *spiritual Nature* of the Gospel *Oeconomy*; it consists, 1. of a *spiritual Head*, or *King*: This is no other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the King of Saints, and LORD of
B
Glory,

- Col. i. 18. Glory, who is justly stiled, *The Head of the Body, the Church*, and as properly affirmed to be *Head over all Things to the Church*; for the FATHER has distinguished him with the peculiar Honour of *KING upon the holy Hill of Zion*. His Reign indeed is altogether spiritual; for though *the Heathen are given for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession*, yet he does not invade the Prerogatives of Princes, nor destroy the Authority of States, but allows them the full and free Use of all temporal Rights, and worldly Enjoyments. Our LORD only assumes Supremacy in a spiritual Sense, and claims Subjection as *KING OF KINGS*; correspondent with which he gives the most salutary Advice, and administers the most ample Admonition, *be wise—be instructed—serve the LORD with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling; kiss the SON, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the Way*. And as it was an antient Prediction, relative to the Nature of the MESSIAH's Kingdom; so was it literally accomplished, and exactly verified in the Days of his Flesh; and to this Day is on Record among the rest of his dying Sayings, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*. And seeing he does not divest earthly Potentates of their peculiar Honour and Dignity, it must be the Height of Arrogance and Presumption in any Man, or Set of Men, to claim Headship, or contend for Supremacy in the Church of GOD: Such Conduct can never be justified by any Apology, nor acquitted, by the most artful Pretences, from a resolute Refusal of EMMANUEL *to reign over them*. And whether it be the Result of Ambition, or the Effect of Ignorance, it will never excuse the Crime; for *Ignorance* cannot be admitted as a Plea, where Instructions are open and full; and *Ambition*, among the puny Race of Mortals, has ever been abhorred by the MOST HIGH: For this the *Babylonian Monarch* was humbled, and *Herod the Syrian* struck dead: For the *Arrogance* of the former, Majesty was sent *to graze with the Beasts*; and for the *Ambition* of the latter, the Applause of Deity vanished in Confusion, and the haughty Tyrant was consumed by Worms. Let our SAVIOUR therefore be crowned with absolute Headship, and dignified with royal Supremacy in the Church of GOD! Let Kings and Princes
- Col. i. 18.
Eph. i. 22.
Psal. ii. 6.
Ver. 8.
Rev. xix. 16.
Psal. ii. 10, 11, 12.
Joh. xviii. 36.
Luke xix. 14.
Dan. iv. 30—34.
Acts xii. 22, 23.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

7

Princes bow to his Sceptre, and all the People shout, Amen!

2. *The Subjects of the Gospel Kingdom are a spiritual People.* This cannot be hid from a diligent Searcher of the Divine Oracles, nor lie concealed from the pervading Eye of Faith: The *Scriptures* unfold it as a material Maxim; *Faith* confirms it a solemn Truth, and *both* together, maintain it beyond Contradiction. In CHRIST's important Conference with *Nicodemus*, it is both affirmed and repeated, as a Truth necessary to be transmitted to Posterity in the Sacred Records, that *we must be born* John iii. again, before we can see or enter into the Kingdom of GOD. In our carnal State we cannot see, that is, perceive, or understand the Spiritual Nature and Divine Constitution of the Kingdom.—We cannot enter in, that is, not possibly belong to the Kingdom, or partake of its gracious Privileges. There is therefore a Necessity of being *born of Water and of the SPIRIT*, that is, of being purified by the cleansing Operations of the HOLY GHOST, and quickened by his enlivening Influences. The Necessity of *Purification* is inferred, from that natural Pollution which renders us unfit for the Kingdom of GOD; and *Regeneration*, from that Death in Sin, which incapacitates for the Kingdom of Life. In perfect Consistence with this Doctrine, St. Paul declares, that *the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of GOD, until washed; nor Flesh and Blood, till they bear the Image of the Heavenly.* Which Truth receives farther Sanction, and on that account may be admitted with the greater Safety, from our LORD's Explanation of a famous Parable—the *Field is the World; the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom; but the Tares are the Children of the Wicked One.* In Agreement with this, St. Paul addresses the Subjects of the Gospel Kingdom under the Character of *Sanctified Ones in CHRIST JESUS*, and Persons called to be Saints: And Peter describes them by the Metaphor of lively Stones built up a spiritual House.

3. *The Laws of the Kingdom are holy and spiritual.* Hence we read, that *the Law of the House, upon the Top of the Mountain, the whole Limit thereof round*

about shall be most holy: Behold this is the Law of the House! And as all the Laws of the Kingdom are of a spiritual Nature, prescribed by a spiritual King, for the Benefit of spiritual Subjects; let us therefore beware, that we neither despise the Authority of the Lawgiver on the one Hand, nor abuse any holy Appointment, on the other; but remember, that the whole Gospel Dispensation is called, the Ministration of the Spirit, and the Ministration of Righteousness.

2 Cor. iii.
8, 9.

4. *The Worship of the Kingdom is pure and spiritual; which, I apprehend, excludes all the Carnal and Ignorant from the Household of Faith. My Opinion, in this Matter, is grounded upon a notable Discourse between the Teacher of Israel and a Woman of Samaria; in which there is a remarkable Description of the Worship of GOD, and a true Character of a Worshipping People.—The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the FATHER in Spirit and in Truth; for the FATHER seeketh such to worship him. From which it appears, that such as worship properly are enlivened by the Spirit, and enlightened by the Word; the one animates the Heart, and sweetens the Devotion; the other regulates the Understanding, and directs the Whole: And when the Spirit is enjoyed, and the Word observed, every Act of Obedience is easy and delightful to ourselves, and pleasing and acceptable unto GOD, for he seeketh such to worship him. But where Souls are destitute of spiritual Life, and regardless of Scripture Authority, their Profession must be formal and false; for Holiness becometh the House of the LORD for ever. And therefore, none are properly concerned in New Testament Worship, but such who are in a Capacity to present their Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto GOD, which is their reasonable Service.*

Psal. xciii.
5.

Rom. xii.
1.

2. With regard to the Perpetuity of the Kingdom, we may venture to say with Daniel, the Dominion is an everlasting Dominion; with Isaiah, of the Increase of the Government there shall be no End; and with Paul, the Throne is for ever and ever. And the same Author is both clear and copious respecting the perpetual Duration of the Gospel Oeconomy.—The Word, yet once more signifieth

Dan. vii.
14.

Isa. ix. 7.

Heb. i. 8.

Heb. xii.
27, 28, 29.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

9

nifieth the removing of these Things that are shaken, as of Things that are made, that these Things that cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace whereby we may serve GOD acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear: for our GOD is a consuming Fire. The temporary Government and ceremonial Shadows of the Jewish State were not only shaken, but entirely removed, to make way for the Gospel Dispensation, which remains as a Kingdom that cannot be shaken by all the Powers of the World, or the Policy of Hell: This shall remain till the Earth vanish, and the Heavens are no more; and then the Kingdom shall be delivered up to the FATHER, ^{1 Cor. xv.} and GOD shall be All in All. And as this Evidence is ^{24—28.} full for the Perpetuity of the Kingdom, so it informs us who should be the constant Subjects, namely, such as receive the Kingdom by Faith, and are thereby in a Capacity of serving GOD acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear. But what seems to be a most full and direct Proof of this Point, is a Part of the Angel's Message to Mary—*Thou shalt call his Name JESUS:—For Luke i. he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his 31—33. Kingdom there shall be no End.* In order therefore, to unfold a little more the Treasure of our Text, and place the Subject in a fuller Light, I shall proceed

II. To shew what I think proper to be believed concerning the Name of JESUS CHRIST, antecedent to Baptism.

By the Name of JESUS CHRIST, I understand all the Majesty and Glory of his Person, together with the Love and Grace of the SAVIOUR. The first Branch of his Name is emphatically declared by all the Titles of Honour, Dignity, and Grandeur, which express *his eternal Power and GODHEAD*: The second Part is included in all the sweet and suitable Appellations which denote his Relation to the Church; and both the one and the other comprized in *Isaiab's* royal Range of prophetic Characters, *His Name shall be called, WONDER-Isa. ix. 6. FUL—COUNSELLOR—THE MIGHTY GOD—THE EVERLASTING FATHER—THE PRINCE OF PEACE.* The three first proclaim his Greatness, the two

two last reveal his Sweetness, and the whole contains whatever *aggrandizes* our LORD, and whatever *familiarizes* our SAVIOUR. The *one* maintains his Supremacy over the Church, and the *other* his unbounded Affection for her; so that *Greatness* and *Sweetness* seem to comprehend all that is necessary to be believed concerning that MOST VALUABLE OF NAMES.

- And 1. I shall consider *the Greatness of his Name*. In this, *Paul* having so remarkably paved the way, it is proper to begin with the Testimony of that heavenly Writer, who, speaking of CHRIST, says, *He is far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come*. In these Words there is such a visible Majesty, that every attentive Reader must be lost in Wonder, the Lovers of JESUS filled with Adoration, and all his Enemies cloathed with Shame. For he is not only above Part, but ALL—not only above *all* the meaner Names of inferior Orders, but *all* the grand and dignified Titles of Principality, Power, Might, and Dominion—not only *all* such in this World, but *all* such in the World to come—and not barely in some small Degree, but *far* or infinitely above them all:
- Eph. i. 21. *GOD having highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; that at the Name of JESUS every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the Glory of GOD the FATHER*. Let none there-
- Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11, *fore scruple to worship the SAVIOUR; for he is over all—GOD blessed for ever; nor be ashamed to confess him LORD, for in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the GODHEAD bodily*. In which Words, the descriptive Gradation undoubtedly surpasses the most enlarged Capacity, and the greatest stretch of Faith; for it is not a Part, but ALL—not only *all the Fulness of GOD*, but *all the Fulness of the GODHEAD*—which Fulness of the GODHEAD does not only *occasionally* visit, but *dwells*, or perpetually resides in him—nor does it *barely dwell*, but *dwells bodily* in him; that is, in the fullest Perfection, in the most close and intimate Union; therefore
- Rom. ix. v. *Isaiah* is free to call him the MIGHTY GOD, and himself
- Col. ii. 9. *himself*
- Isa. ix. 6. *himself*

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

II

himself to assert his EQUALITY with the FATHER. Joh. x. 30. Hence the Faith, concerning the *Greatness* of his Name, is neither less or more, than to believe his eternal Power and GODHEAD; which exactly corresponds with the Inscription upon his Vesture and Thigh, KING OF ^{Rev. xix.} KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. This Part of ^{16.} his Name is a firm Foundation, and lays a solid Basis for all the rest; adds a peculiar Dignity to what follows, and without which, all that could be advanced beside, would amount to no more than a Range of insignificant Cyphers, or a Multitude of unmeaning Words. But,

2. To consider the *Sweetness* of his Name; which, added to the former, completes a most amiable Character. And this Part we have from the Mouth of an heavenly Messenger, with full Commission from the Court above, delivered to *Joseph* before the Birth of JESUS, left on Record by an inspired Writer, and transmitted to Posterity as a considerable Branch of the *Glad Tidings*.—*Thou shalt call his Name JESUS*, was the kind ^{Matt. i.} Message delivered—for he shall save his People from their ^{21.} Sins, the weighty Reason assigned. Sure, never was a Name more important, significant, or sweet! It is really like *Ointment poured forth*. O let the *Virgins love* ^{Song i. 3.} him! O let the Redeemed rejoice! No Tongue can express, nor can Thought conceive, how sweet and precious this worthy Name is to a poor Sinner, whose Soul is waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and groaning for ^{Luke ii. 25.} the Liberty of the Children of GOD. Let them tell, if ^{Rom. viii.} they can, who have drawn Water out of this Well of ^{21.} Salvation, and tasted that the LORD is gracious, what ^{Isai. xii. 3.} Life it inspires, what Sweetness it affords, being quite ^{1 Pet. 2, 3.} unspeakable and full of Glory. ^{and i. 8.}

But, in order that every one may be comfortably satisfied with CHRIST on the *one* Hand, and chearfully obedient to him on the *other*, it is necessary they should, in some Degree, be assured of their Interest in, and Relation to him as their LORD and GOD, their Husband, Friend, and Brother; for if they are uncertain of an Interest in CHRIST, they will either be careless and indifferent about the Performance of his Institutions, or else practise them with the Fear and Terror of Slaves. And indeed, ^{if}

Job xix. 25. if we do not know that our REDEEMER liveth, and have the Knowledge of Salvation by the Remission of Sins,
 Luke i. 77. we remain in Suspense about our eternal Happiness, and
 Eph. iii. 17. can neither be rooted and grounded in Love, nor built up and established in our most holy Faith. To know that
 Song ii. 16. my BELOVED is mine, and I am his, excels every other Blessing possessed on this Side of Glory; and yet I look upon that grand Privilege to be the common Portion of
 1 John v. 10. all Believers; * for he that believeth on the Son of GOD hath the Witness in himself. Besides, the LORD does
 John i. 12. not only give a Power to become his Sons, but also sends forth the SPIRIT of his SON into the Hearts of his
 Gal. iv. 6. Children, crying Abba FATHER. And when favoured with this divine Charter, and blessed with this heavenly Experience, the Soul can come to GOD with a filial Fear, and practise his Ordinances with a cheerful Heart: Then, and not before, can we claim a Title to all Appointments, and plead a Right to the Childrens Bread.
 Matt. xv. 26. Which brings me,

III. To advance some Reasons, why I cannot admit any to be proper Subjects of Baptism, but such only who have Faith concerning the Things of the Kingdom of GOD, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST, and are capable of making a personal Profession.

Under the two former Heads are shewn, what I apprehend the most material Points, necessary to be believed

* For further Satisfaction in this Point, I would refer the Reader to a careful Perusal of the Sixteenth Dialogue of Mr. HERVEY's *Theron and Aspasio*; which, for the Strength and Solidity of Evangelical Argument, and the convincing Force of Experimental Reasoning, is so clear and satisfactory, that, in my Opinion, I never yet saw any Thing to excel, perhaps not to equal it upon the Subject: And because I have a peculiar Regard for this Author's Works, especially his *Series of Dialogues and Letters*, would willingly recommend them; but not being Master of Encomium, shall borrow what he has said concerning a certain Author, to express my Sentiments of his Performance—"Were I to be banished into some desolate Island, possessed only of two Books besides my Bible, this should be one of the two, and perhaps the first that I would choose." Lond. 3d. Edit. Vol. III. p. 336.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

13

ved concerning the Kingdom of GOD, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST; and now take it for granted that all Persons, favoured with such heavenly Experiences, have an undoubted Right and Title to Baptism. But the grand Question to be resolved under this Head, and to give a Sanction to all that has been said, is, Whether such Persons are the only proper Subjects, and, in Consequence, all Infants excluded?

In order to practise the Ordinance of Baptism aright, it appears necessary that the Subjects should be acquainted with the Authority that enjoins, understand the Laws that regulate, be persuaded of their Obligation to observe, and impressed with a Sense of the Honour and Respect due to GOD in that Solemnity: And if these Things are so, then every Article already mentioned, is a necessary Pre-requisite to Baptism, and no Infant can be a proper Subject. And I am of Opinion our Text entirely solves the Difficulty; for, *when they believed Philip, preaching the Things concerning the Kingdom of GOD, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized both Men and Women. When they believed, not before—the Things concerning the Kingdom of GOD, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST, Matters far above the Capacities of Infants—they were baptized both Men and Women; not the least Hint about Children.* But it may be objected, “That though Infants are not expressly mentioned, or apparently referred to in this Text, yet such a single Circumstance can never be supposed to decide this Matter, especially as their Right and Title may be more directly intended in other Passages.”

I am very positive there is no express mention of *Infants Right* to Baptism in the Word of GOD; nor am I satisfied that it is any where implicitly included; for the Truth of which I am quite willing our Scripture Inquiries should be strict and universal, but choose to decline traditional Antiquity, and pay no Respect to human Authority, or the Practice of Multitudes. For Antiquity, simply considered, can never add Strength to a Cause, nor Honour to any Profession. Sin cannot be supposed to deserve Applause, because it was committed in Paradise, and bears Date with the most antient Records of *Moses*; Gen. iii.

nor should the *Beast* and *False Prophet* be held in Repute, because the *Mystery of Iniquity* began to work in the Apostolic Age. As for human Authority, if it have any Weight, it is owing to the Word of GOD, and in Consequence that Testimony of Truth is sufficient without it; and a Multitude of Votaries will never dignify any Cause, nor prove the Validity of any Institution: For they are but *few that are chosen—enter in at the strait Gate—and the Sheep of CHRIST's Pasture* are but a *little Flock*. Besides, *Isaiab* hath been bold to declare, that a *Multitude of all Nations fight against Mount Zion*. And *John* speaks of a Period, in which *all the World wondered after the Beast*. For these Reasons I choose to proceed by a better Warrant, than the dark Uncertainty of bare Antiquity; abide close by a *surer Word of Prophecy* than human Tradition, or the exactest Compositions of the best of Men, and copy a more infallible *Example*, than merely the Pattern of the purest Churches.* Let us then weigh the Cause, examine the Matter, and search for Truth in the following Manner.

1. By the plain Appointment of JESUS, and the strict Commission of our LORD; *Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST: teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.*

Never was there a Commission more full and important, or an Institution more positive and plain: On that Account, it is not only pertinent to our Purpose, but amply sufficient to decide the Controversy, and establish the Truth beyond all Debate. For if People were but

* The whole Intention of the Author, by these Observations, is no more, than to set aside human Antiquity and Tradition, as being, in many Cases, quite precarious and uncertain; exclude the Authority of Councils, Synods, and Assemblies, in altering or new-making the Worship of GOD; and to pay no Respect to the Pattern of Nations or Nations, where they visibly deviate from the Simplicity of CHRIST.

but sufficiently cautious not to play with Words, or make light of divine Matters, I hardly think they would ever dream of the least Reference to Infants in the Commission; and consequently to infer their Right from this Passage false and unfair. For as it includes the Whole of CHRIST's revealed Will, necessary to be known by us, and practised in the Church; so *Teaching* and *Baptizing* comprize the whole Commission: Which, if granted, then nothing can be more evident, than that, such as are to be baptized ought to be taught, and the Taught only are to be Baptized. This will be quite clear, if it is considered, that the Teaching here intended, accompanied by the Power of the SPIRIT, is productive of a divine Faith; for, as *Faith cometh by Hearing*, so *the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the SPIRIT of GOD*, for they are Foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. As the Instruction therefore, antecedent to Baptism, implies a Capacity of knowing and receiving the Things of the SPIRIT of GOD, and Children are altogether incapable of such sublime Teaching, they cannot possibly be designed by JESUS as proper Subjects of Baptism. Besides, baptizing in the Name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST is one of the most solemn Acts of instituted Worship, in which the Person baptized is equally concerned with the Person baptizing; on which Account there can be no Propriety in the Administration, unless the Subjects are acquainted with the Name of the HOLY TRINITY: Consequently, Infants are as much without a Title to Baptism, as they are destitute of Knowledge respecting that sacred Name. The Sum is this; Persons who are taught by the Word and SPIRIT of CHRIST, sweetly disposed to adore FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, and capable of observing all Things GOD hath commanded, are the only proper Subjects of this Ordinance; which cannot be the Case of Infants, and therefore have neither Part nor Lot in the Matter.*

2. By

* As I cautioned my Hearers, in like manner let me entreat my Readers, not to entertain the least Suspicion that my Sentiments are harsh and uncharitable, respecting the happy State of Children who die in Infancy; for though my

2. By the Example of inspired Men we may warrantably determine this Point; because to them their Master's Will was as fully known, as his Institutions were punctually observed. And I am inclined to believe, that upon a strict and judicious Search into the Scriptures, the Practice of inspir'd Men will be found not only to correspond with the Pattern of divine Institution, but both appear full for our Purpose: For no one Instance can be given of any Person baptized without Instruction, and a publick Profession, prior to the Solemnity. Therefore proper Subjects,

Luke iii. 8. under *John's* Administration, are required first to *bring forth Fruits worthy of Repentance*.—Those baptized by John iv. 1. CHRIST were first *made Disciples*.—*Peter's* numerous Acts ii. 41. Flock of Converts first *received the Word gladly*.—*Philip's* noble Disciple first *believed with all his Heart*.—Acts viii. *Paul's* Jailor, with all his House, first *rejoiced in GOD and believed*. We have therefore a Cloud of Examples, 37. for Numbers rarely equalled, and for Experience scarcely 34. excelled: And I should think, where the Precept is so plain and peremptory, and the Precedents so numerous and unexceptionable, it is impossible to miss the Mark, or be at a Loss about the proper Subjects of Baptism. But if in this Matter, Prejudice should shut the Eyes of any, against the clear Light of our LORD's Commission, and Custom lead them counter to the plain Pattern of inspired Men, no Wonder to find them in a dark and inextricable Labyrinth. For it must be allowed, that it is as daring and dangerous, and as dull and uncomfortable to administer or practise any Ordinance without a divine Warrant, or the Example of inspired Men; as it is strange and unaccountable to appear in

Conclusions so peremptorily exclude them from any Part in the outward Church State, and deny their Right to every Ordinance thereof, yet I dare not affirm they are incapable of internal Washing, or without a Part in eternal Glory: For although I have not met with one Word, either in the Old or New Testament, from which the final State of those who die in Infancy can be inferred, yet where the Matter is so liable to Dispute among Men, and the Scriptures so silent about it, always choose to take the most charitable Side; on which Account, I am inclined to believe the Salvation of all who die in Infancy.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

17

in the Defence of any Cause without the Authority of either. For that religious Practice which has not the least Pretence to the one, nor Countenance from the other, must certainly stand on a precarious Bottom, will never admit a critical Enquiry, nor bear a favourable Defence: And such I cannot but esteem the Cause of Infant Baptism, because the Word of GOD does not furnish us with either Precept or Precedent in its Favour, and without the one or the other, we have no sufficient Warrant for such an Observance. For all religious Practices are either the Appointments of GOD, or the Traditions of Men; and to change or depart from the first is attended with a devouring Curse, *Mourning and De-* Isa. xxiv: *solation*, and to comply with the latter, condemned by a 4, 5, 6. divine Query, *Who hath required this at your Hand?* Isa. i. 12. Therefore, upon the Whole, as Infant Baptism is destitute of Authority from positive Institution, and unprecedented by any Pattern of inspired Men, it can never be criminal to discontinue the Practice, and bear a faithful Remonstrance against it. But though I am fully persuaded these two Arguments are quite conclusive in Vindication of our Sentiment, and entirely refute the Cause of Infant Sprinkling; yet that all may see we have *Line upon Line and Precept upon Precept*, to maintain our Point, and decide the Controversy, shall further produce in Defence of the Subject, what is absolutely required before, at, and immediately after the Administration of the Ordinance. For if there are certain Pre-requisites necessary to qualify Persons for Baptism, and particular Actions required of all proper Subjects, which never were known or performed by any Infant; it must undoubtedly be an additional Support to our Plea, and hang as a dead Weight upon the other System. And,

1. *Repentance*, in the Subject, prior to Baptism, is certainly necessary to qualify a Soul for that Ordinance, of which all Infants are incapable. *John did baptize in* Mar. i. 4. *the Wilderness, and preach the Baptism of Repentance, for the Remission of Sins*; and *Paul*, upon two Occasions, does not scruple to call the same Solemnity the *Baptism* Acts xiii. *of Repentance*. Should these Testimonies need any farther 24. Confirmation, it may be met with in *Peter's* explicit An- and xix. 4. *swer to the important Question of the Pentecost Converts,*
Men

Acts ii. 37, *Men and Brethren what shall we do? His Reply was, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the HOLY GHOST.* The above Citations are a sufficient Proof of my Assertion, that Repentance is necessary to constitute any Person a proper Subject of Baptism; and therefore to exclude Infants from a Title to the Ordinance must be a fair Deduction.

2. Infants cannot be made *Disciples* previous to Baptism; proper Subjects can, and are. *JESUS made and baptized more Disciples than John.* And as this Method of our only Guide is so plain and pertinent, it ought to be duly attended to by all his faithful Followers. Our LORD first made them Disciples, then baptized them, which is the very Import of the ministerial Commission, *Go teach or disciple all Nations, baptizing them.* But as Infants cannot be Disciples prior to Baptism, neither does that Ordinance make them such; the very Term denotes them Learners of their Master's Will, and Followers of his Example. Submission to Baptism is an Instance of a Disciple's Obedience, and therefore supposes him such before; consequently unless People are instructed by CHRIST and his Messengers, they cannot be called Disciples; and unless they are Disciples, they have no Title to Baptism; and as Infants cannot be the one, we may lawfully deny their Right to the other.

3. *Confession of Sin* is necessary in the Party baptized, which cannot possibly be performed by Infants. Mar. i. 5. *And there went out unto John all the Land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their Sins.* It is urged indeed, "that as all the Land of Judea went out and were baptized of John, there must be a Multitude of Children among them." But it is vain to suppose, and impossible to support, that the sacred Historian intends every Individual in the Land of Judea and City of Jerusalem, for the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the Counsel of GOD against themselves, being not baptized of John. Besides, going out to be baptized, implies a Capacity of knowing, judging, and determining, where and what they were going about. But what entirely removes the Difficulty, and

Luke vii.
30.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

19

and at the same Time detects the Objectors in being more fruitful in their own Inventions, than diligent in attending to the Word of GOD, is the Confession of Sin at their Baptism; for none were baptized but such as confessed; therefore, as Infants cannot confess their Sins, they have no Title to Baptism.

4. Infants cannot receive the Word *gladly*, antecedent to their Baptism; all proper Subjects ought. *They that* Acts ii. 41. *gladly received his Word were baptized.* From the Context it is apparent, the Word which they gladly received, was chiefly the Exhortation to Repentance, and the Promise of Remission of Sins; and from the Citation itself it is no less evident, that such as have received these Blessings with Gladness of Heart, and such only, are the true and proper Subjects of Baptism. Besides, the remaining Part of the Verse entirely excludes Infants; for as they cannot be useful to the Church, neither can they be added to it: There can be no Addition, unless the Thing added be proper, necessary, useful, or ornamental. *The Church of GOD* being therefore a Company, Cor. i. 2. of called, sanctified, worshipping Believers, no Person uncalled, and incapable of worshipping the LORD, can be added to the Church of GOD. And as this is one of the most plain and primitive Patterns, of baptizing and adding to the Church, we may justly infer, it is best Persons should wait for Baptism till they receive the Word gladly; and remain without Communion till they submit to Baptism; and then, according to divine Appointment, be added to the Church. And when any have witnessed such a good Confession, bore such a publick Testimony, and are indulged with such a remarkable Favour, it becomes their exalted Privilege, and no less their indispensable Duty, to *continue stedfast in Doctrine and Fellowship, breaking of Bread and in Prayer*: But Infants cannot perform any Part thereof, consequently have no Claim to Baptism, nor Right to be added to the Church.

5. Infants cannot have the Answer of a good Conscience, nor give a Reason of the *Hope* that is in them at Baptism; but proper Subjects should have the one, and be capable of exhibiting the other. *The like Figure* Pet. iii. 21. *whereunto*

whereunto even Baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards GOD) by the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. I esteem it most eligible to refer these Words to Water Baptism; and it is equally evident, that no Infant can be a Subject of the Qualification required; for a good Conscience, implies an Heart sprinkled from an evil one; the Answer towards GOD, intends the inward Witness of Life, together with the true and proper Sense of the divine Authority that enjoins Baptism. And when these Things are sweetly received, and experimentally known, the Soul sees in Baptism, as in a Figure, the cleansing Blood of JESUS, and his glorious Resurrection from the Dead; is led by the Shadow to the Substance, saved from trusting to the external Washing, and delivered from despising this Appointment of GOD. Again, as Infants cannot have the Answer of a good Conscience at Baptism, neither can they give a

1 Pet. iii.

15.

Reason of the Hope that is in them. Be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and Fear. From these Words it is evident to me, that we have an unquestionable Right to ask, and every one undoubtedly obliged to give a Reason of the Hope that is in them; but we must take Care to ask, and they to answer with Meekness and Fear. Nor must they simply reply they have Hope, but assign some solid Reason for it; that is, give a scriptural and rational Account why they expect such a Blessing, embrace such a Sentiment, espouse such a Cause, and practise such an Ordinance. Consequently if the Abettors of Infant Sprinkling be Followers of that which is good, and confident, that when we speak against that prevailing Custom, they are suffering for Righteousness sake, having a good Conscience that we speak Evil of them, and falsely accuse their good Conversation in CHRIST, let them produce a Reason of the Hope that is in them with Meekness and Fear; then the Reproach will turn upon us, and the Slander cast upon their Sentiment be wiped away; but till then we must remonstrate against their Practice, and call their Authority in Question: And I am inclined to believe, they will never be able to bring forth what may be admitted as a solid Reason in their own Favour, and pass for a convincing

Proof

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

21

Proof with us ; for the Weight of their Cause seems to rest too much upon mere Conjecture, and dark Consequences, together with an implicit Complaisance to the Practice of a Multitude. But these are too feeble for the Support of a solemn Cause, and too vague for the Decision of a weighty Controversy. Besides, should those who are sprinkled in Infancy live to be as old as *Methuselah*, and be as really converted as *Paul*, they can have no other Knowledge of their being baptized but the Word of a Relative, or the Testimony of a Register ; not personal Persuasion, nor conscious Certainty. Therefore, as Infants cannot have *the Answer of a good Conscience* in themselves, nor be able to give a *Reason of their Hope* to others, until taught ; we have the Answer of a good Conscience, and can assign a weighty Reason, why we esteem them improper Subjects of Baptism ; *for whatso-* Rom. xiv.
ever is not of Faith, is Sin. 23.

6. Infants cannot *put on CHRIST* at Baptism ; proper Subjects can, and do. *As many of you as have been* Gal. iii. 27.
baptized into CHRIST, have put on CHRIST. The putting on of *CHRIST* intends, the taking up his Cross, a publick Profession of his Name, with a firm Resolution to follow his Example, and observe his Instructions, through *good and evil Report*. And this is done by every 2 Cor. vi.
Believer, at the Performance of Baptism, in a strong 8.
and expressive Manner ; for there is not only a chearful Compliance with a Part of the Will of *JESUS*, which is despised and rejected by many, and an open Declaration for *CHRIST* before Angels and Men ; but a personal Promise and humble Engagement to obey him in all Things, and bear a faithful Testimony to their Lives End. And as truly gracious Souls are acquainted with the Faithfulness of *GOD*, and far from Strangers to the Deceitfulness of their own Hearts, all this is done with great Diffidence in themselves, and full Dependance on him *who worketh in them, both to will and to do, of his* Phil. ii. 13,
good Pleasure. But Infants being incapable of such Caution and Conduct, are improper Subjects of Baptism, which requires it.

7. Infants cannot *justify GOD*, and fulfil Righteousness, at or after the Administration of Baptism ; proper

D

Subjects

- Luke vii. 29. Subjects do both. *The People and Publicans justified GOD, being baptized with the Baptism of John.* They justified the Authority of GOD, by observing what he had enjoined; and vindicated the Cause of Truth, by attending the Ministry of the Gospel: But Infants cannot justify GOD by a Submission to his Appointments, or a proper Defence of his Cause, therefore have no Title to Baptism. And as Children cannot justify the Lawgiver, neither can they fulfil the Righteousness of any Law. *Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness.* These were the Words of JESUS to *John the Baptist*, when he appeared backward to baptize our SAVIOUR: From which it is plain, that the Subject, as well as the Administrator, is equally concerned in fulfilling Righteousness. Nor is there any Weight in that Objection, which “supposes Man-kind, in a fallen State, incapable of fulfilling Righteousness in any Sense.” For *John* was one of the fallen Race, and yet he was joined with JESUS in this Matter. Besides, if Baptism be a righteous Institution, and appointed for the Benefit of a righteous People, then the Observance of it is so far the fulfilling of Righteousness, as it is complied with from a View to the Authority, and practised in Honour of a righteous GOD; for all Obedience to any Law, is a fulfilling the Righteousness of that Law. Nor is there any better Pretence for imagining, “that our LORD has Respect to the fulfilling a Branch of the Ceremonial Law, which being once accomplished, the Obligation ceases, and the Practice ought to be discontinued.” For I believe, it can never be proved, nor do the *Pedo-Baptists* pretend, that Baptism belonged to that Figurative Law which was to be abolished by CHRIST; but is purely a New Testament Appointment, which served to usher in, and stands inseparably connected with the Gospel Dispensation. And if so, it is evident our LORD *left this for an Example*, with a Design that *we should follow his Steps*. And there is less Ground still for asserting, “that as CHRIST and *John* fulfilled this Branch of Righteousness, it is for ever without Defect, and nothing remains for us to do.” For though CHRIST, as our Surety and Substitute, fulfilled that Righteousness, which is the Matter and Ground of our Justification
- Matt. iii. 15.
- 1 Pet. ii. 21.

fication before GOD, in such a Manner, and with such Perfection, *that nothing can be added to it, or taken from* Eccles. iii. it; yet, as our Pattern and Example, he had no Inten- 14. tion to supersede our Obedience, but rather designed to shew us the Way. And this was remarkably the Case in the Article of Baptism; for had our LORD designed to discontinue the Practice, and dissolve our Obligation, by his own Submission to that Ordinance, there could be no Propriety in his *making and baptizing Disciples* after John iv. 1. this; and there must be still less in transmitting it to Posterity as an *essential Branch* * of his last Commission. Matt. Upon the Whole; if the proper Subjects of Baptism xxviii. 19. ought to be capable of justifying GOD, and fulfilling Righteousness, Infants have no Title to that Ordinance.

8. Infants cannot *bring forth Fruits* worthy of Repentance, nor walk in *Newness of Life*; proper Subjects of Baptism can do both. *John's* Directory and Advice to the Multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, was faithful, sharp, and instructive:—*Bring forth there- Luke iii. 8. fore Fruits worthy of Repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, GOD is able of these Stones to raise up Children unto Abraham.* *John* was well acquainted with the Disposition of their Minds, and the prevailing Notion they entertained, and were ready to produce upon all Occasions—*We have Abraham for our Father.* From John viii. which they concluded themselves in the Favour of GOD, 33—39. and undoubtedly intitled to all Ordinances. But the *Baptist* cautiously prevents their Plea for Admission to Baptism,

D 2

from

* To call Baptism an essential Branch of our LORD's Commission, will probably have a disagreeable Sound in the Ears, and a disgustful Relish to the Hearts of such Persons who have learned the pernicious Art of esteeming many Injunctions of GOD merely indifferent. For my Part, I am not forward to make so free with the smallest Punctilio of instituted Worship, on the one Hand, nor so presumptuous on the other, as to affirm, Baptism essential to Salvation; yet think I may be allowed to say, and am not ashamed to insist, that Baptism is essential to the Gospel Dispensation, otherwise, am apt to believe, it would never have been appointed under that Oeconomy.

from this Quarter, by assuring them, such a Relation would have no Weight with him, nor give the least Right to the Ordinance he administered. Hence it appears extremely reasonable to debar Persons from Baptism, until a more solid Pretence for their Right and Title can be urged, than barely a Relation to Christian Parents. *John* insists upon their bringing forth Fruits meet for, or worthy of Repentance; a Phrase of the same Import with one of *St. Paul's*, in his famous Apology before *Agrippa*, namely, *to do Works meet for Repentance*; for as a Tree is known by it's Fruits, so Repentance is known by good Works; these being Fruits and Effects of Repentance, and the best Proofs of it's Sincerity.

This Argument is corroborated, and the Cause we plead farther established, by our SAVIOUR's Explanation of a celebrated Parable—*He that receiveth Seed into the good Ground, is he that beareth the Word and understandeth it, which also beareth Fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.* For tho' Infants may hear the Word, yet not so as to understand it, and bring forth Fruits; without which they are not Children of the Gospel Kingdom, and consequently without a Title to Baptism. Finally, *St. Paul* declares, that *we are buried with JESUS by Baptism into Death; that like as CHRIST was raised up from the Dead, by the Glory of the FATHER, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.* Baptism by Immersion being a lively Representation of the Burial and Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST: In that Ordinance, as in a Figure, believing Souls are *planted into the Likeness of his Death*, professing to be dead to all below; and their coming up out of the Water, is not only a Symbol of our SAVIOUR's rising from the Dead, but a manifest Token of their own Resurrection from the Death of Sin. And as this is entirely effected by the Power of him *who raised JESUS from the Dead*, they are inclined to seek those Things which are above, and so aim at Newness of Life in their whole Walk. But as People cannot walk unless they have Life, so neither can they walk in Newness of Life, except they are renewed; therefore, unless Persons appear to be blessed with spiritual Life, and the renew-
ing

ing of the HOLY GHOST, we may warrantably repeat our Assertion, they are improper Subjects of Baptism.* But as I cannot launch farther into the Subject at this Time, for further Satisfaction, if ever Providence bring me to this Place on a like Occasion, shall take into Consideration, The principal Arguments alledged in favour of Infant Baptism—Answer some of the most plausible Objections brought against our Sentiment—Vindicate the Mode of Immersion—Point out some of the Ends and Uses of the Ordinance—And urge some Motives to engage to a Compliance such as are born from

* This seems to be a proper Place for observing, that *Gal. iii. 27.* and *Rom. vi. 4.* are considered by some *Pedo-Baptists* as having no Reference to Water-Baptism, but entirely relate to the Baptism of the SPIRIT. I dare not affirm, nor do I believe, that the internal Work of the HOLY GHOST is without a Place in these Scriptures; for I am confident, the Substance is therein contained, which Water Baptism represents in a Figure; yet, whatever is plainly expressed, or figuratively implied, am as positive Water Baptism ought not to be excluded, and that for the following Reasons; 1. It is no where supported by Scripture, nor can it with any Propriety correspond with Experience; to say that we put on the internal Work of the HOLY GHOST, and in so doing put on CHRIST; for it is *he that worketh in us both to will and to do—sheds abroad his Love in our Hearts—and puts his Spirit within us*; for we cannot put on CHRIST internally, but externally; which is significantly expressed in Baptism, wherein we openly put on CHRIST, and is emphatically maintained in our strict Adherence to his Example, by which *we adorn the Doctrine of GOD our Saviour.* 2. The SPIRIT's Work upon the Heart never is, nor can with any Propriety be, called a *Burial*, but is represented by Figures quite the reverse; such as being *quickened—born again—raised from the Dead, &c.* But the Baptism of Water by Immersion, as it is a plain Figure of, so may it justly be called a Burial. Besides, the Phrase *buried by Baptism*, should rather have been, buried by the HOLY GHOST, had his Baptism been intended; for why should not *Paul* be as explicit as *John*? Upon the Whole, it is evident to me, that Water Baptism is referred to in these Texts; and clearer still, that none have a Right to that Ordinance, but such as by a Profession are capable of putting on CHRIST, and in Conversation qualified to *walk in Newness of Life.*

Phil. ii. 13.

Rom. v. 5.

Ezek. xi.

19.

Eph. ii. 5.

John iii. 3.

Eph. ii. 6.

Matt. iii.

11.

Heb. vi. 3. from above; *and this will we do, if GOD permit.* I shall therefore, at this Time, conclude with a few Inferences.

And 1. As the Kingdom of GOD is a spiritual and an abiding Kingdom, and we are sent forth, into the Highways and Hedges, with a Commission to proclaim Salvation to the Ends of the Earth, and invite the Banished to their Father's House; give me Liberty to inquire, who are prepared to enter into the Kingdom, and made willing to observe all the Laws of the State. Are there any here who have seen the King in his Beauty, got a Discovery of the Door CHRIST, are drawn by the Cords of his Love, and overcome with the Views of his Glory? Are there any here who are longing to know the King's Pleasure, and waiting to do his Will? *Even this is from the LORD.* For the rebellious Nature is subdued, and the stubborn Heart made willing in a Day of the MESSIAH's Power. You have submitted to the royal Scepter, when the King rode in holy Triumph: You are the visible Spoils of his Sufferings, and the grand Trophies of invincible Might. You are lawful Captives returning to Zion with Songs; the Prisoners of Hope sent forth with Shoutings; the ruined Relatives of CHRIST restored; and the filthy Favourites of Heaven washed and made clean in the Blood of the Lamb.

Isa. lx. 1. *Arise, shine for your Light is come, and the Glory of the LORD is risen upon you.* Worship him therefore in the Beauty of Holiness, and run your Race with swift Feet and enlarged Hearts; for *Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantry, and all her Paths are Peace.*

But are there not some who are yet far from the Kingdom of GOD, and Strangers to Life and Peace? Some, who are walking in the Counsel of the Ungodly, standing in the Way of Sinners, or sitting in the Seat of the Scornful? Some, who are unalarmed in the midst of Danger, and void of every heavenly Desire? Some, who are *Enemies in their Minds by wicked Works; Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise; without GOD, and without Hope in the World?* O Sinners! O Slaves! unmoved with your Misery, and unacquainted with your Doom! O that the Voice of GOD may

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

27

may rouse, the Arrows of the ALMIGHTY pierce, and the Arm of JEHOVAH pluck you as Brands out of the Burning! *May the great Trumpet be successfully blown, that they, who are ready to perish in the Land of Assyria, and the Outcasts in the Land of Egypt, may come, and worship the LORD in the holy Mount at Jerusalem.* Isa. xxvii. 13.

2. If the Things concerning JESUS CHRIST, be chiefly the Greatness and Sweetness of his Name, then our principal Concern should be to know we have an Interest in both. This Experience would make us obedient to him on one Hand, and satisfied with him on the other; his Greatness will fill our Souls with holy Reverence, and his Sweetness solace our Hearts with heavenly Comforts. Those who can call JESUS LORD by the HOLY GHOST, cannot doubt his Sufficiency, nor suspect his Faithfulness; for he is GOD over all, and the faithful and true Witness—Those who are favoured with a Discovery of him as a SAVIOUR, may sweetly trust and confide in him; for *he saves to the uttermost, and receives the chief of Sinners*—Those who are blessed with the Benefit of the *White Stone*, and the *New Name*, may rejoice and be glad, for they shall *eat of the bidden Manna*, and drink of the *Fountain of Life*—And such as are cheerfully obedient to CHRIST's Commands, and strictly observant of his Instructions, may look for a Blessing, and expect his Presence; for the Promise is the same *to the End of the World.* Heb. vii. 25. Rev. ii. 17. Psal. xxxvi. 9. Matt. xxviii. 20.

But are there any whose Hearts are ready to whisper, whose Practice doth openly reply, *We will not have this Man to reign over us?* And are there any whose Hearts are not subject to the Scepter of JESUS, and whose Lives are unconformed to his Statutes? *Hear ye the Word of the LORD: Kiss the SON lest he be angry, and ye perish from the Way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their Trust in him.* Luke xix. 14. 2Kin. vii. 1. Psal. ii. 12.

3. Is it so, that those only are proper Subjects of Baptism who are blessed with divine Faith, and both able and willing to obey? Then what a Mistake is Infant Baptism, be it's Votaries ever so many, or it's Applause ever

1 Cor. ii. 5. ever so great! It may indeed *stand in the Wisdom of Men*, and be confirmed by the Council of *Trent*; but unless a firmer Foundation than the one, and a better Sanction than the other can be produced in it's Favour, we shall still insist the Ceremony is an Error, and pursue the Abettors of the Sentiment with this home but reasonable Question, *Who hath required this at your Hand?* And if the Time can be referred to when it was appointed by GOD, or the Place of Scripture produced where it is required, then the Blame will rest upon us, for condemning the Practice with such a peremptory Air, and denying it's Authority with such a Degree of Resolution; but if that cannot be done, and the Matter still remain under the strongest Suspicion of Falshood, then let the Stumbling-stone be removed from us, and all Cause of the Dispute laid at the right Door.

4. As I have thus far, to the best of my Apprehension, represented the Ordinance of Baptism in a Gospel Light, let every one *search the Scriptures, whether these Things be so*; and if it should appear that I have mistaken any Passage, or concealed any Truth that would have prejudiced the Cause I have been pleading for, or supported the Sentiment I have all along condemned, shall rejoice to be informed and rectified. However, I am not conscious to myself of such Conduct, nor have I the least Desire to deal deceitfully in the Word of GOD; yet knowing the Weakness of my own Understanding, and not being unacquainted with that strong Attachment every Man bears to his own Principles, it is probable in some Respects it may happen; but should any Thing of this Sort be kindly pointed out, and appear judiciously refuted by the Word of GOD, I hope as chearfully to own my Mistake, and as publickly to recant my Error, as I have made free to speak my Mind on the Subject in Debate. For, upon clear Conviction of the Truth of any Point, or full Persuasion of Defect in my present Sentiments, trust I shall never be backward to embrace the one, nor ashamed to own I have erred in the other. It is one Thing to be positive in my present Opinion, another to be obstinate in opposing Truth. As I shall strictly adhere to the first, till I see Reason to retract, will with equal Readiness comply with the latter, when I see

sufficient

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

29

sufficient Cause to embrace; "for both are Duties I owe to my Conscience, both are Duties I owe to my GOD!" To be fixed in the one may not be criminal, to be backward in the other, will admit of no Excuse.

5. Is Baptism to be esteemed an Ordinance of the Gospel, and has it the Sanction of Heaven? Then let it never be numbered with Trifles, nor stand in the List of Things indifferent, but always bear the Weight of a divine Appointment, and for ever be cloathed with the Honour of an holy Institution: Let us banish and disown that stale Objection, and utterly detest and abhor that muddy Maxim, which some have the Assurance to assert in Words, and the Presumption to abide by in Practice, "That it is a Matter merely indifferent, whether we submit our Bodies to the Washing of Water in Baptism, providing our Souls are washed in the Blood of the Lamb." This Objection is supposed to receive a deal of Weight, from the Method *Paul* took to inform the Judgments, stop the Mouths, and silence the Clamours of the judaizing Converts—*In CHRIST JESUS Gal. v. 6. neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.* But this cannot be said of Baptism till Time shall be no more; nor could it ever be affirmed of Circumcision, until the Death of CHRIST had abolished that Law. For there was a Period when the Contempt of that Ordinance was attended with cutting off from the Congregation, and the Neglect branded with Disobedience to GOD; and we may remember, when *Moses*, probably thro' the tender Insinuations of a Bosom Friend, only postponed the Matter, the Chief of *Israel* could not be spared, and the Leader of the People went near to fall. Let us then be far from slighting or neglecting this solemn Affair, from a mistaken Notion of what *St. Paul* pertinently proposed respecting the Impropriety of an abrogate Law, and in open Defiance to the plain and peremptory Appointment of JESUS: Besides, let it be duly considered, how opposite this Doctrine is to the Apostolick Faith, and how contrary such laboured Logick is to *St. Peter's* simple Reasoning—*Peter* pleads, *Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the HOLY GHOST as well as we?* Whereas you suggest,

E

gest,

Rom. iii.
4.

gest, "Can any Man command Water, that we should be baptized, who have received the HOLY GHOST as well as others?" The Answer is plain, the Reply is obvious—*Let GOD be true, but every Man a Liar.*

6. Let us be sincere in all our Researches, and honest to all our Convictions; let us enquire into the Word without leaning to our own Understanding, and examine the Matter with a single Eye to the Glory of GOD. Let us come to the Divine Oracles stripped of ensnaring Prejudice, void of every worldly View, resolved to embrace what we discover, and put in Practice what we believe. This is to be honest to our own Consciences, and sweetly comply with the Teaching of GOD. And let no Man consult with Flesh and Blood in this Matter, nor postpone or trifle in this Affair; for why should we be ashamed of our Master's Cause, stifle our own Convictions, or grieve the SPIRIT of GOD? The World's Allurements are not to be compared with our LORD's Authority, nor the Slanders of Men to the Censures of my own Conscience.* A noble Mind can withstand the one, but the stoutest Heart cannot sustain the other.

7. To conclude: As you who are to be baptized have professed your Faith in CHRIST, to a few of his Followers, and are now to testify your Attachment to him in Baptism, before this Congregation; O pray for his Presence—O plead for his Blessing; attempt not to go without the one, nor permit him to depart without the other. Be as resolute as *Moses*—Be as peremptory as *Jacob*. For if you are not favoured with the Figure unveiled

Exod. xxxiii. 15. *Jacob*.
Gen. xxxii. 26.

* On this Occasion I beg Leave to subjoin what the famous Mr. JOHN HALES said upon another, viz. in a Letter to Archbishop LAUD, in which he pleads for Liberty of Conscience, and insists upon a strict Compliance with every Conviction of Truth: "Since in Case of Conscience, many times there is a Necessity to fall either into the Hands of Man, or into the Hands of GOD; of these two whether is the best, I leave every particular Man to judge; only I will add this much, it is a fearful Thing to trifle with Conscience, for most assuredly, according unto it, a Man shall stand or fall at the last."

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

31

unveiled, and allowed to behold the Substance——If you are not blessed with heavenly Light, and indulged with spiritual Views, it will be a dry, unmeaning Ordinance, and a dull Evening to you: But if you enjoy the promised Presence of your LORD and Master, launch into the Fulness of your GOD and SAVI-OUR, and observe the Freeness and taste the Sweetness of your REDEEMER's Grace; then you will sit under the Shadow of Life with great Delight, submit to this Ordinance with Alacrity of Soul, and, like other baptized Believers, go rejoicing away. Let us then join in that emphatic Prayer, and pour forth that expressive Petition—*O send out thy Light and thy Truth; let them lead us, let them bring us unto thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacles*—and when this is obtained, we will as chearfully agree in that holy Resolution, *to go unto the Altar of GOD; unto GOD our exceeding Joy; yea, with our whole Heart will we praise thee, O GOD our GOD.* Psal. xliii. 3, 4.

The End of the FIRST SERMON.

[illegible]



SERMON II.

EPH. iv. 5.

There is — One Baptism.



IF we did not act the Part of idle Spectators, and demean ourselves with a slothful Indifferency, amidst the most alarming Occurrences, we should certainly be deeply affected with *the Signs of the* Matt. xv
Times.—EARTHQUAKES, these astonishing Tokens of GOD's Displeasure, have uttered an awful Warning by their unexpected Visits, and destructive Effects.—INUNDATIONS, the ominous Portenders of spreading Calamity, seem to threaten Desolation, by attempting to burst the Boundaries GOD had assigned them.—STORMS and TEMPESTS, to the Surprise of careless Mankind, “ have been
“ roused into such resistless Fury, and raged with such
“ wild Career, that they have vexed the Continent,
“ tossed the Seas, dashed Navies on the Rocks, and
“ driven Forests from their Roots.” Thus Tempests preach, and Waters prophecy; for whilst they produce such horrid Havock, they administer Admonition to the Children of Men.—FAMINE, that Source of deep Distress,

THOUGHTS on

Distress, and Harbinger of unnumbered Evils, hath entered our Borders, and threatened us with further Miseries. Such a severe Visitation, while we pray for the Return of Plenty, calls upon us to repent. *—And WAR, the baneful Badge of human Barbarity, hath hung out a bloody Flag, drawn a cruel Sword, and pointed it's fatal Engines. But tho' Nations may cloud their Quarrels, and soften their Disputes with the Name of a *Religious War*; and tho' Princes may boast of their Bravery, and distinguish themselves for equipping mighty Armaments, and preparing dreadful Artillery; yet, hear O ye Sons of Slaughter, and *Men skilful to destroy*, your mangled Slain and mournful Devastations loudly declare—all this to be the Effect of Sin—and the Result of insatiable Ambition! And while huge Armies are unmercifully devouring one another, powerful Fleets waiting all Opportunities to disturb and destroy, and the masterly Elements, by the Authority of a supernatural Commission, spreading wild Amazement through the World; should not rebellious Men quickly bethink themselves, and the surviving *Inhabitants of the Earth* instantly learn *Righteousness*?

But the Commotions in the natural, and Confusions in the civil World, are not more visible or affecting than the Deadness and Insensibility, the Supineness and Indifferency of the religious World; for the Abominations of the Wicked are so black, the Deceit of Professors so vile, Backslidings in *Israel* so great, Confusions in the Camp of the Saints so frequent, and a lukewarm State so universal, that any considerate Person may conclude, without assuming the Name of a Politician, and foretel, without invading the Prerogative of a Prophet, that a Cup of Indignation is filling fast, a stormy Cloud gathering thick, awful Judgments advancing apace, and an impending

* When this Sermon was preached, Scarcity of Provisions was a Calamity not only feared but felt by Thousands. It is true, the Kindness of GOD hath made a quick Return, by banishing our Fears, and filling our Baths; but if we are not truly humbled for our Sins, and properly thankful for his Mercies, the LORD may again visit with a want of Bread, and punish for the Abuse of Plenty.

impending Stroke threatens to be heavy. Surrounded with such awakening Providences, it is high Time to enquire, *Watchmen, what of the Night?* Nor can an Answer be devised more suitable, at this Juncture, than *Wo unto us, for the Day goeth away; for the Shadows of the Evening are stretched out!* But as there is undoubtedly a Remnant who are wrestling for the rising of Jacob, and have great Searchings of Heart for the Divisions of Reuben, on that Account, and for their Benefit who bear a faithful Testimony, and for the Comfort of such as are weeping Witnesses, there remains a reviving Cordial,—*at Evening Time it shall be light.* This should engage our closest Application to the Throne of Grace, and produce the most earnest Addresses to the Court of Heaven, for the Return of GOD's Power and Presence, and the Establishment of Zion's Peace and Prosperity. And as there is a *Curse in the Camp*, and a *Stumbling-block in the way*, we should be willing and earnest to have them discovered and removed; for which Reason our Divisions should be searched to the Bottom, that the Lot may rest upon the real *Achan*, and the Stumbling-stone be laid at the right Door; therefore let us give GOD no Rest till he grant his Presence, nor part with Truth till we make a thorough Search. I know, indeed, that some People are such avowed Enemies to Controversy, and their common Cry so much for Peace, that their easy Concessions have a Tendency to rob Religion and betray the Truth. In this Case, open War is better than such ensnaring Friendship; for if we give up the least Mite of Truth, true and lasting Peace can never be obtained; and if we tolerate the smallest Error it will spread like a Plague: Therefore, if *Saul spare*, let *Samuel slay*; and if *Peter dissemble*, let *Paul withstand*. As we should peremptorily pursue Peace by righteous Measures, so should we inflexibly contend for all Truth.—But let the Search begin at the Heart, and the Enquiry correspond with Experience, then our Debates will be mild, our Arguments conclusive, and our Satisfaction great.

BAPTISM being one of those Points about which a grand Division subsists among Christians, and the important Article to be enquired into at this Time, let us search

Jude,
Ver. 3.

search the Scriptures, in a conscientious Manner, for the primitive Doctrine and proper Intent of that Ordinance. For my Part, by comparing the Convictions of my Heart with the Dictates of my Bible, Believers Baptism appears to me, *Part of the Faith once delivered to*, and always to be defended by, *the Saints*; therefore, in the former Sermon, I have pretty fully expressed my Sentiments to that Purpose, and am now to make a further Attempt in Defence of it: But before I proceed, shall obviate two Objections. And,

Mar. xvi.
16.
Acts viii.
37.

In the first Place, some may be ready to remonstrate against the Subject, "That if the Power and Purity of Christianity be so very weak and defective as now acknowledged, and the Unity and Peace of *Jerusalem* so dear and desirable as I have intimated; why should I not choose a more weighty Subject, and not toss up again this Bone of Contention, which, instead of reviving decayed Godliness, has a natural Tendency to harass and disturb the Church?" To this I answer, The Work I am engaged in calls me to it; and besides, if the Ordinance of Baptism stand upon the Authority of CHRIST, and be dignified with the Sanction of Heaven, I shall then make free to affirm, and have the Assurance to abide by it, that the Appointment is both solemn and weighty: And it is a Question with me, whether there be any Part of instituted Worship, or Christian Duty more so. Faith indeed lays the Foundation for it, and without Experience in the Subject, it would be an unmeaning Thing; but where Faith is wrought in the Heart, Baptism is required in the Practice; and perhaps it is with a View to this, that they are so strictly connected and inseparably joined in the New Testament. Besides, if a Change in CHRIST's Order, a Departure from the Purity of Faith, and an Abuse of the Institutions of GOD, have a fatal Tendency to corrupt, darken, deaden, and divide the Church, we are willing a strict Search be made, who should bear the Blame.

The *Baptists* strictly insist upon a personal Profession of Faith in the Subject, before ever they urge an Observance, or allow a Title to the Ordinance of Baptism. They

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

37

They set before all the Sons and Daughters of our ruined Race, that every Individual *is shapen in Iniquity and conceived in Sin*, and that Mankind are universally Transgressors from the Womb—that except a Man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD—that Redemption is by the Atonement of CHRIST, and Salvation by his mighty Power—that Faith is the Gift of GOD and the Work of the HOLY GHOST—and when Souls profess to have obtained this precious Grace, through the Righteousness of GOD and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, then, and not till then, they are exhorted to observe the Ordinance of Baptism, and every other Appointment of GOD. But the Instructions of the *Pedo-Baptists* are of a quite different Nature; for they declare, that *Infants are born again in Baptism—are made Members of CHRIST, Children of GOD, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*—that the Faith of the Infant with all other Graces is strengthened and increased—and that those who are born again, can never totally and finally fall from Grace.* Therefore, according to these Principles, every Child baptized in Infancy is born again, and all Persons regenerated shall be undoubtedly saved; consequently, to preach the New Birth to those who have been baptized in Infancy, would be as great an Impropriety, as to suspect the Salvation of any one of them would be uncharitable. In this Case, the vilest Sinner is as sure of Heaven as the greatest Saint, providing he has been baptized in Infancy. But if these Things are not so, then they either fall from Grace, and lose the Benefit of their Baptism, or else our Compilers are mistaken in their Estimate of the Ordinance; consequently, if the Sentiments of our *Pedo-Baptist* Brethren be as defective and inconsistent as we imagine; it must be friendly in us to

* That these are the standing Sentiments of both our National Churches, may be seen by comparing what the Priest says after signing the Child with the Sign of the Cross, and the Answer to the 2d Question in the Catechism, with the 17th Article; as also by comparing the Answer to the Question, *What is a Sacrament?* in the larger Catechism, with the 17th Chap. of the Confession of Faith.—The same Doctrine may be observed in several other Places of both Compositions.

THOUGHTS on

revive the Controversy, speak plain, and attempt to rouse them from their implicit Repose.

Again, in the second Place, others may allow that we have an indisputable Right to declare our Sentiments of the Subject, and yet think we are unhappy in the Choice of our Text, alledging, " it has no relation to Water Baptism, but purely respects the Baptism of the SPIRIT." To which I reply, Such of the *Pedo-Baptists* as I have heard urge the Impropriety of applying this Text to Water Baptism, confine it to the Operations of Grace upon the Heart, and do not extend it to the extraordinary Gifts of the HOLY GHOST. But it is a Question with me, whether ever the internal Work of the SPIRIT be called a Baptism; yet should

1 Cor. xii. 13. St. Paul's Assertion, that *by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body*, be allowed for a plain Proof of that Notion, it will not even then be admitted, that the Phrase in our Text has the least Reference to that glorious Work; for the *one Faith* implies that gracious Change, and includes whatever belongs to that holy Principle, and is cautiously distinguished by the Apostle from the *one Baptism*; therefore the Text respects Water Baptism. And this Solemnity is strictly and properly one; for it is only rightly administered in one Way, that is, in Water by Immersion; to one Sort of Subjects, Believers in CHRIST; in one Name, of FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT; and ought only to be once performed, when rightly administered.

I shall now proceed to fulfil my Engagement made in this Place, at a former Baptism; namely, that if ever Providence brought me here on a like Occasion, would take into Consideration the following Particulars:

I. To examine the principal Arguments alledged in Favour of Infant Baptism.

II. Answer the most plausible Objections against our Method.

III. Vindicate the Mode of Immersion.

IV. Pro-

IV. Propose some of the Ends and Uses of the Ordinance.

V. Produce some Motives to engage to a Compliance such as are born from above.

I am inclined to hope, that were all these Propositions judiciously handled in Correspondence with the Scriptures, and clearly supported by convincing Argument, in a manner adapted to the meanest Capacity, it would then be apparent, to all unprejudiced Minds, that there is but *One Baptism*, and that the Method we practise bids fairest for it. Let us then,

I. Examine the principal Arguments alledged in Favour of Infant Baptism.

Under this Head I shall not rake up all the Arguments that have been devised for the Support of this Ceremony, nor pretend to obviate all the Methods that have been taken to keep this Gourd alive; but shall confine myself to a few of the most popular, the best grounded, and which had the greatest Weight with me, when a *Pedobaptist*. And if these will not stand the Test of the searching Word, but fall as *Dagon before the Ark*—If 1 Sam. v. these will not endure the *Fire* of the flaming Testimony, 3, 4. but consume like Wood, Hay, and Stubble; it must then 1 Cor. iii. be allowed, that a Multitude of lesser Aids will be insuf- 12, 13. ficient, and only tend to destroy, what they are brought to maintain; for it is not so much the Number, as the Strength of Evidences that decide any Matter; I shall therefore, at this Time, chiefly attend to the Argument founded upon Circumcision, and some others drawn from Scripture Consequences, because these have the greatest Show of Reason, the best Appearance of Probability, and are most urged by the People of that Persuasion. And,

I. It is supposed, that “ Baptism came in the Place, “ and answers much the same Ends, under the Gospel “ Oeconomy, as Circumcision did under the legal Dispensation; therefore, as Infants were Subjects of the “ one, they ought not to be debarred the other.”

But it should first be proved, not taken for granted, that Baptism came in the room and stead of Circumcision, before the Conclusion can be admitted as just and pertinent; and I am at a great Loss to know how a Proof of this will be come at, unless mere Conjecture be allowed to pass for solid Argument; for there is not the least Intimation of it in the Holy Scriptures, and little or no Agreement in the Design, Mode, or Subjects; consequently, the Succession must be equally dark with that of the Pope to *Peter*.

However, should it be insisted upon, tho' destitute of Proof, and roundly asserted, without a sufficient Degree of Probability; we must not be condemned as unreasonable, nor censured as too severe, should we enforce a strict and punctual Observance in every Punctilio, and in case of Failure in the most minute Matter, charge home the Neglect as loose and partial Conduct in the most solemn Things. And if in this we only insist upon what is just, and press what is plain, then the Father, Master, or Governor must be the Administrator of the Ordinance; for *Abraham* circumcised his own Seed and Servants, and *Joshua* the Congregation of *Israel*.—The Child must be baptized the eighth Day from the Birth—The Males only admitted—When baptized, all the external Privileges of the Church granted—And then the Infant laid under a Necessity to keep the whole Law. But should these Things be judged to bear too hard upon their Non-conformity, and our pressing them be looked upon too severe, it is at least reasonable for them to shew us what Article they are bound to observe, and what Part they are allowed to neglect, otherwise the Charge must rest, or they conform.

The intire Silence of the Scriptures about the Succession of Baptism, in the room and stead of Circumcision, leaves us quite uncertain about the Matter, besides other Circumstances which appear to put it beyond Dispute. For, it seems absurd to suppose, that one figurative Ordinance should come in the Place of another, when both are in full Force, and answer each their true and proper Intent at the same Time; which was evidently

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

41

dently the Case in the two Rites under Consideration. And it is more unreasonable still, considering their material Difference in Mode, Subjects, and Design; for the Mode of the one was by the Incision of a Knife, and the Mode of the other by dipping in Water; the Subjects of the one, the Male Children of *Abraham*, with all that were bought with his Money or born in his House; the Subjects of the other, the Children of JESUS, both Male and Female, bought with his Blood, and born from above: And the Design of the one was to perpetuate the Remembrance of that Covenant, which insured the Possession of the promised Land to the circumcised Tribes till the MESSIAH came; but the Design of the other, is openly to manifest our Attachment to JESUS, and publicly declare our Dependence on him. Besides, the Authority of every Ordinance depends wholly upon a positive Institution, and not in the least upon any Thing supposed to be similar in another; therefore we are to keep our Eye fixed upon the original Appointment and primitive Pattern, and by no Means to take our Mark from any ceremonial Observance. These Considerations have inclined me to think, that Baptism did not come in the Place of Circumcision; however, as that Circumstance is thought to admit of much Altercation, should it be given up (which I am by no means willing to do) am confident the Cause of Infant Baptism will gain no Ground by such a Concession; for as Circumcision was limited, by particular Instructions from GOD, to the Gen. xvii. natural Males of *Abraham*, together with such as he bought with his Money; so Baptism, by a divine Restriction, is only allowed to Believers in CHRIST; and Acts viii. this Matter is as clear from the New Testament, as the 37. other is from the Old; which I am prepared to prove at any Time.

It is allowed on all Hands, that Circumcision was abolished at the Death of CHRIST; and I think it cannot be denied, that the Respect which that Covenant had to the natural Seed of *Abraham*, and their temporal Favours, vanished with the Rite itself; consequently, whatever Reference the Covenant of Circumcision, or the Promise made to *Abraham* therein, had to the spiritual Seed of the Patriarch, their Right to any Gospel Ordinance,

- nance, is wholly assumed upon the footing of Faith in CHRIST and Relation to him. *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of GOD. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children: but in Isaac shall thy Seed be called. That is, they who are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of GOD: but the Children of the Promise are counted for the Seed. Know ye therefore, that they who are of Faith, the same are the Children of Abraham. And if ye be CHRIST's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise.* These Testimonies are evident Proofs, that no Regard is had to the natural Seed of *Abraham*, above the Children of the *Gentiles*, but that all are equally without a Right to Baptism, till called by Grace, and capable of *walking in the Faith of their Father Abraham*. Which is farther clear from the Denial of his natural Seed, at the first Administration of Baptism, until Repentance and good Works made their Title visible. To conclude; the *Jews* were called the Circumcision, and such only had a Right and Title to the Ordinance that distinguished them. Therefore, supposing Baptism came instead of Circumcision, it can only extend to such as are termed the *Spiritual Circumcision* in the New Testament: And these are thus characterized, *We are the Circumcision, who worship GOD in the Spirit, rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no Confidence in the Flesh*. Consequently, whoever are incapable of worshipping GOD, rejoicing in CHRIST JESUS, and casting off all Confidence from carnal Descent and Birth-privilege, belong not to the New Testament Circumcision; and whoever are destitute of that Relation, have no Claim to Baptism, which is supposed to come in the Place of Circumcision; therefore, as Infants are incapable of such distinguishing Experiences, they are very improper Subjects of Baptism. This Argument I am determined to abide by, so long as Baptism coming in the Place of Circumcision is insisted upon; that as the natural Circumcision only had a Right to the Ordinance of Circumcision, so the spiritual
- Rom. ii. 28, 29.
- Rom ix. 6, 7, 8.
- Gal. iii. 7—29.
- Rom. iv. 12.
- Mat. iii. 8, 9.
- Phil. iii. 3.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

43

tual Circumcision only have a Title to the Baptism that succeeds it.

2. A Plea for Infant Baptism is urged from the Commission, *Go teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* The Argument upon it is, "That seeing the Term in the Commission is *all Nations*, then Infants, being a Part of the Nations, must be equally included with the rest; and are therefore to be looked upon as proper Subjects of Baptism." Matt. xxviii. 19.

This Argument is so unfair and inconclusive, that it is seldom insisted on, and frequently given up, by the most judicious *Pedo-Baptists*; yet as some of the less knowing often harp upon it, I shall for that Reason consider it a little.

And to bring the Argument to a short Issue; if every Individual in all Nations be intended, then has our LORD given a Commission to baptize all idolatrous, prophane, wicked, and delirious Persons; for they are a Part of Nations as well as Infants: But if those who state the Argument, will not allow it to be in all Respects universal and unconfined, then their Reasoning is of no avail, but attended with the greatest Disadvantages; for either they suppose too much, or prove too little. Thus Men, by attempting to introduce and support, what GOD has never enjoined, must either overshoot their Cause, by advancing what they cannot admit themselves; or else fall so far short of their intended Mark, as to leave the Subject without a Warrant from the Word of GOD. For if there be a Limitation prescribed by the Commission, then it is better to regulate our Sentiments by the clear Distinctions of JESUS, than the uncertain Conjectures of Men. And indeed the Text is so explicit, that a Person must be either prevented through Prejudice, or extremely indolent in his Enquiries, if he do not discern the Commission for baptizing, to be of the same Extent with the Limit prescribed by Teaching; consequently, Persons must be taught, before they are baptized: And whoever attempts to put a different Meaning upon the Passage, seems capable of treating the Word of GOD too much according to his own Fancy.

And

And it is somewhat strange that People should impose such an unreasonable Task upon themselves, as undertake to support the Cause of Infant Baptism from this Text; for I have already asserted, and am still determined to abide by it, that the Commission is not only altogether silent about Infants, but plainly and positively excludes all Persons from the Ordinance of Baptism, who are not made Disciples by Teaching, and capable of observing all Things CHRIST hath commanded. So that instead of furnishing an Argument in Favour of Infant Baptism, the whole Tenor of the Commission opposes that Sentiment, and appears full on our Side.

3. Another Argument, for the Support of Infant Baptism, is grounded upon a Passage relative to little Children being brought to CHRIST. *Then were there brought unto him little Children, that he should put his Hands on them and pray; and the Disciples rebuked them. But JESUS said, suffer little Children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And he laid his Hands on them, and departed thence.* From which it is inferred, “that as the Conduct of the Disciples highly displeased CHRIST, and was severely reprov’d by him; the little Children suffered to come, were taken up, and blessed by JESUS, and a positive Declaration, of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, they must have a Right to Baptism, and on no Account ought to be denied.”

But until it can be proved, that these Infants were brought with a real Design to be, and in the Issue, were actually baptized by our LORD, this Passage will not furnish out the least Appearance of an Argument. This is a Task no Man will readily undertake, and I am unwilling to impose it; only it is more unreasonable to attempt, and equally impossible to form an Argument for Infant Baptism without it: And I am well persuaded, our Opponents are not such Strangers to Scripture and common Sense, as to rest the Weight of their Cause upon a bare Probability that CHRIST baptized these Infants. For it is natural to suppose, had that Practice been customary, the Disciples would not have forbid them; and more than probable, that Baptism was never

thought

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

45

thought of through the whole Transaction. But I rather take this to be the Drift of their Argument, "That every one who are declared Subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven, must be proper Subjects of Baptism: For CHRIST has affirmed, that Infants belong to the one; therefore hath allowed them a Right to the other."

To this I reply: Whether by the Kingdom of Heaven, be intended the Gospel Church-state, or eternal Glory, or both, to me is not very apparent, nor indeed material; though I rather think the former. But whatever we understand by the Phrase in this Passage, it does not appear from any Thing here advanced, that JESUS concludes either Infants in general, or these in particular, to be Subjects of that Kingdom; for it is not of such considered merely as Infants, but of such in Temper and Disposition, that enter into, and constitute the Kingdom of Heaven. I rather, therefore, take the Intention of CHRIST's Resentment, and the Purport of our SAVIOUR's Reasoning on this Occasion, to be a Repetition of that deep Reproof with which he corrected the Arrogance, and checked the Pride of his Disciples at another Time. Besides, if this Way of Reasoning were admitted, as a Proof of Infant Right to Baptism, their Title must be equally clear to the LORD's Supper. And it is not a little surprising, that the same Persons who assert the Propriety of Infant Baptism, should traduce Infant Communion as a gross Absurdity; for whoever is a proper Subject of the one, has an undoubted Right to the other. If they deny Infant Communion, because such Subjects cannot *examine themselves*, nor perform it in Remembrance of CHRIST, for a Reason equally just, we deny Baptism; because they cannot *repent and believe*.

Matt.

xviii. 1, 2,

1 Cor. xi.

24—28.

Acts ii. 38.
and viii.

4. *The Promise is to you and to your Children*, is a Scripture frequently insisted upon as an undeniable Proof of Infant Baptism. "For as the Children of repenting, believing Parents, are affirmed to have an equal Right to the Promise with themselves; they have consequently an undoubted Title to Baptism."

37.

Acts ii. 39.

But before this Argument can be supposed to prejudice our Cause, or turn the Scale in Favour of Infant

G

Baptism,

Baptism, it must first be proved, that the Word *Children* intends little Infants, and that the *Promise* mentioned entitles them, as such, to Baptism. I am indeed apprehensive that such a Task will be exceeding difficult, if not altogether impracticable; for it cannot be imagined, when GOD says to *Moses*, *Speak unto the Children of Israel*, &c. that ever the Phrase intended Infants, but wholly respects the Posterity of *Jacob*, advanced to Years of Maturity; so that the Word may regard their Offspring, when pricked to the Heart, in like manner with themselves. And to maintain, that the *Promise* in this Place authorises the Baptism of Children, appears quite impossible; for the *Promise* is only an Encouragement to Repentance and Faith, but does not entitle to Baptism without either. Let not our *Pedo-Baptist* Brethren imagine that I am unreasonable, in insisting upon a Proof of these Things; for the Cause they plead requires it, and their Argument on this Text is a mere Quibble without it. This will be more evident, if it be farther considered, that the Persons *Peter* is speaking to are exhorted to repent; and the *Promise* is limited to *as many as the LORD our GOD shall call*; these only were baptized who received the Word gladly; and such only were added to the Church, as continued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine, in Fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers; consequently all Infants are excluded, and a noble Argument furnished for Believers Baptism.

1 Cor. vii. 5. 'Tis urged, the Apostle's Assertion, that *the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Wife, and the unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the Husband; else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy*, affords an Argument in Favour of Infant Baptism: "For
 14. " seeing the Children of such Parents, as were both,
 " or one of them Christian, are by the Apostle reputed
 " holy; in Consequence they must be proper Subjects
 " of holy Baptism."

But unless it can be made manifest that this Passage relates to Baptism, and that *Paul* had the Subjects of that Ordinance in his Eye, there will be no Weight in the Argument: For the proper Subjects of Baptism cannot be known, or distinguished by any one Thing, except

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

47

cept what is relative to, or correspondent with the Ordinance itself; consequently, it must be hard Work to fix upon the proper Subjects, from a Passage that has not the most distant Reference to Baptism; which I take to be the Case in the Text before us; because it is not Baptism the Apostle is treating of, but the Lawfulness of Believers and Unbelievers cohabiting together in the State of Wedlock, together with the relative and natural Character of their Children born in such a Case. Therefore, as there is no Foundation for an Argument in this Text, all Reasoning upon it must be weak and inconclusive, and, in my Opinion, proves nothing so much as the Badness of the Cause it is brought to maintain; for were it good, such a weak Support would be quite rejected: Besides, could this Argument be allowed to prove any Thing, it will amount to no more, than the Right of such Infants as are descended of Parents who are both, or one at least a Believer; which cuts off the Title of all Children where both Parents are Unbelievers. But it is not a *being born of Blood, or of the Will* John i. 13. *of the Flesh, or of the Will of Man, but of GOD*, that entitles to Gospel Ordinances. In Agreement with which St. Paul asserts, *henceforth know we no Man after the* 2 Cor. v. *Flesh*. And whoever attempts to defend the Notion of 16. Childrens Relation to GOD, and Right to his Ordinances, merely because they are born of Christian Parents, contradicts *John* and opposes *Paul*. And farther, the Advocates for Infant Baptism must allow, that the Sanctification of the unbelieving Wife or Husband is equal to the Holiness of their Children; and why might not they, as well as their Seed, be baptized on such a Presumption? After all, it is hard to say, whether the Holiness of the Children be inferred from the Faith of the Christian, or the Sanctification of the Unbeliever, consequently can furnish out no Argument for what is pretended.

6. Infant Baptism is supposed to be dignified with the Sanction of undoubted Evidence, from the mention made of the Baptism of whole Households; and an Argument upon it is formed in the following manner: "As almost
" every Family hath Infants, it is exceeding probable
" there were some in the several Households referred to
" in the New Testament; and if so, then, as Infants

“ are a Part of the Family, there would be no Propriety
 “ in recording the Baptism of whole Houſholds, had In-
 “ fants been excluded.”

But as the whole Amount of this Reasoning is no more than a bare Probability, it is ſtrange they ſhould reſt a ſolemn Cauſe on ſuch a broken Reed; and more ſurpriſing, that mere Suppoſition ſhould ſtand for ſolid Proof. For this Argument has not the leaſt Weight, nor can it be eſteemed deciſive, unleſs the Certainty of Infants, in theſe Families, be firſt diſcovered. But I chooſe to avoid leaving that Difficulty at their Door, as the ſame Im- poſſibility might be left upon me; namely, to prove there were no Infants in theſe Houſholds. And indeed ſuch a needleſs Shift would be as unreaſonable in me, as it is unneceſſary for the Support of the Cauſe I plead: For allowing there were Infants in ſuch Families, it is nevertheleſs evident, that not one Infant was baptized; and if that can be made appear from the Hiſtory of theſe Houſholds, then hope my Aſſertion will not only be admitted as certain and ſolid, but all Pretenſions to a Plea for Infant Baptiſm, from theſe Circumſtances, vaniſh into Air.

Acts xvi. 15. And to begin with *Lydia* and her Family, it is ſaid, *ſhe was baptized and her Houſhold*. What was the natural or relative State of her Family, is hard to ſay, yet am pretty poſitive, it was a ſpiritual Houſhold, united to CHRIST, and joined in Brotherhood; for we are informed, that *Paul and Silas, going out of the Priſon, entered into the Houſe of Lydia, and when they had ſeen the Brethren, they comforted them and departed*. By that Term, no Doubt is intended Brethren in CHRIST, and theſe are ſuch as know their Heavenly Father, unite together, and walk in Fellowship. But as Infants are never, as I remember, called Brethren in the New Teſtament, and the Things here mentioned lie far beyond the Experience and Exerciſe of Infants; we may conclude, that no Infant was baptized at this Time by *Paul and Silas*. Beſides, as the Brethren, in the Houſe of *Lydia*, were comforted by the Apoſtles, and Infants are not in a Capacity of receiving Comfort that way, it follows, that they cannot be numbered among the Brethren or the Baptized.

The Jaylor and his Family is another Instance, of whom it is said, *he was baptized and all his*. The History of this famous Convert, with those of his House, is so distinct and minute, that to produce it as a Testimony for Infant Baptism, argues the greatest Inattention to the Passage, and is a most remarkable Proof of a bad Cause; for *the Word of the LORD was spoken to him, and to all that were in his House; and he rejoiced, believing in GOD with all his House*: So that a Capacity for hearing and receiving the Gospel, was equally extensive with, and really enjoyed by all baptized on this Occasion; and whenever we find a whole Family possessed of such Experiences as *believing in GOD, and rejoicing in GOD*, we will not scruple to baptize them all: and it is as possible to meet with such Households, as it is impossible to prove Infants the proper Subjects of Baptism from this Text.

The Case of *Crispus* is generally produced on this Occasion, of whom it is said, *he believed in GOD with all his House*; but we have not the least Account of his Baptism, or 8. Family's, unless included among the *Corinthians*, who *bearing, believed, and were baptized*. And as this is all that we require, antecedent to Baptism, and are confident Infants are incapable of such Experience, we may conclude with the greatest Assurance, that no Infant was baptized with this *Corinthian Ruler*.

The last Household is that of *Stephanus*, which *Paul* says, *he also baptized*; and because there is no mention of the Faith of his Household, this Circumstance is commonly insisted upon as an unanswerable Argument for the Cause of Infant Baptism. But it should be observed, there is no Notice taken of his own Faith, more than the Faith of his Family, in this Passage; yet elsewhere we meet with an Account of the Faith of both. *I beseech you Brethren, (ye know the House of Stephanus, that it is the first Fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the Ministry of the Saints) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth*. Therefore, as Infants cannot be the Fruits of Gospel Success, nor addict themselves

THOUGHTS ON

to the Ministry of the Saints, we may safely and peremptorily conclude, there were no Infants baptized in the Household of *Stephanus*.

Having now considered what I take to be the strongest Arguments for the Cause of Infant Baptism, shall proceed,

II. To answer the most plausible Objections against our Practice.

It is well known that the Generality of our *Pedo-Baptist* Brethren frequently grant, that the Scriptures are more copious and clear in the Point of Believers Baptism, than for the other Side of the Question; which Concession is so full against themselves, and so much in our Favour, that we must look upon it as quite unaccountable, and receive it as extremely unkind, should they paint us in black Colours for espousing that Tenet, or rigorously withstand our Sentiments: But so it frequently happens, however unreasonable and unfair.

It is not worth while to take Notice of all the trifling Objections that have been devised, nor possible for me to enumerate all the base Slanders cast on our peculiar Profession; shall therefore only consider a few of the most popular, which, if just and true, make us so vile and scandalous, that it will be easy to account for the uncommon Freedom of our Adversaries.

The first Objection and Charge against our Principle, is "Cruelty and Barbarity to Infants; because in denying their Right to Baptism, we deprive them of all the rich Blessings and choice Privileges included in and connected with that Ordinance."

Indeed, if it can be proved, that Infant Baptism is according to the Will of GOD, and made appear that they reap any Benefit thereby, it will then be evident, we are not only incorrigibly stubborn, but equally cruel in denying their Title, and depriving them of the Advantage; because Numbers die in Infancy, and those who do survive, are a long Time before they obtain the Favour.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

51

Favour. As to the first, we are so far from being satisfied, it is the Will of GOD, that we think we can prove the contrary, and therefore are justified in opposing it. And as to the other, it must first be known, what these Blessings are, which accrue to Infants by Baptism, before we can be justly charged with Cruelty or Barbarity. But, in my Opinion, it will be a troublesome Affair, and next to impossible to settle this Point; for the Scriptures say nothing of the Matter, and the *Pedo-Baptists* strangely disagree about it: Some suggest, that Infants are regenerated in Baptism, and made Members of CHRIST by that Ceremony—Others deny that, but at the same time affirm, that Faith and all other Graces are strengthened and increased. Some maintain, that the Infant engages to be wholly and only the LORD's—Others would have us believe that the Sureties engage for them. And as they are thus free to contradict one another, so some of them are unfortunately inconsistent with themselves; for at one Time, Baptism admits Infants into the visible Church; at another, they must be baptized, because they are already in it: Therefore, until the *Pedo-Baptists* are agreed among themselves, and consistent with the Scriptures, about the Benefits arising to Children by Baptism, it will be most for their Honour to decline the Charge, and safest for us to deny, that Baptism can answer any good End, or be of the least Advantage to Infants. It cannot be useful at the Time of Administration, because the Child is ignorant about the Nature and Design of the Ordinance; nor can it be profitable afterward, because there is no absolute Certainty whether ever it was done: Therefore, as there is no such Institution as Infant Baptism revealed in the Scriptures, nor can it be of any Advantage to such improper Subjects, this Objection cannot be supposed to affect us.

2. We are said “to make Gospel Privileges more strait and narrow than they were under the Law; for Infants were circumcised under that Dispensation, and why should they be deprived of the Benefit of Baptism under the Gospel Oeconomy?”

Not to insist upon the Uncertainty of Baptism's supplying the Place of Circumcision, nor barely to wave the
the

Prov. xxx.
6.

the Objection by a Gospel Assertion, that *Circumcision was a Yoke of Bondage, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear*; we may more directly wipe off this Asperſion, and unhinge the Force of the Slur. For ſuch a Method of Reasoning cannot be levelled againſt us with the leaſt Degree of Juſtice, nor urged with the ſmalleſt Hopes of Succeſs, merely for denying Infant Right to Baptiſm, unleſs it can be made appear, that in ſo doing we act contrary to the Will of GOD, revealed in the Oracles of Truth; for we are not upon any Account to *add to the Word of the LORD*, nor eſteem that a Privilege, which cannot, in the Nature of Things, be of the leaſt Advantage. According to an abiding and infallible Commiſſion, we are *to go out into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature—that he who believeth may be baptized*—and then admitted to all the Inſtructions of the Church, and allowed the free and full Enjoyment of all New Teſtament Appointments. And this is the very utmoſt Extent of inſtituted, or external Privilege that GOD hath vouchſafed to enjoin, or we bound to obſerve. Therefore, in no Senſe do we leſſen or contract the Gospel Liberty, only make a Conſcience of keeping this Ordinance, conſiſtent with the divine Appointment, and correſpondent with primitive Purity.

3. It is urged, “ that as unbaptized Infants are looked upon to be in no better State than the Offspring of *Jews or Heathens*, Children’s deſcending from Chriſtian Parents can be no Advantage to them.”

It is true, that ſome conſider all Children upon a level; and I am one that makes no Difference among the Children of *Jews or Heathens*, nominal or real *Chriſtians*; but conſider all under Sin, and equally without Right to Baptiſm. The Benefit of having Chriſtian Parents, does not conſiſt in adminiſtring to Children, while Infants, what can be of no Advantage to Soul or Body; but in having the Opportunity of a pious Example, and ſalutary Education, as ſoon as they can copy the one, and receive the other. By Nature, the Seed of Saints is never ſanctified, nor the Children of godly Men changed, without the SPIRIT of GOD; it is Grace that makes

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

53

makes the Difference, not any Thing in, or done by a Parent. Besides, as the greatest Sinner cannot be indulged by GOD, nor the choicest Favourite granted a Dispensation from Heaven, to practise what is not enjoined, or neglect what the LORD hath commanded; consequently, there can be no Plea for Infant Baptism without a positive Institution, nor Pretence against our Practice, while the Scriptures are full on our Side.

4. Another Objection that runs among the Vulgar and Inconsiderate, is, "that the People of our Profession have frequently been heretical in their Sentiments, dissolute in their Lives, and extravagant in their Behaviour; on which Account we are never to be encouraged, but our Opinion should be rejected with Abhorrence, and treated with Contempt."

But should this stale Objection be allowed to take Place, and such an unfair Maxim universally propagated, then the purest Profession will not escape our Dislike, nor the strictest Denomination be free from Censure; yet it is often pressed upon the *Baptists* with such a Degree of Assurance, and esteemed an Objection of such remarkable Weight, as if the mad Men of *Munster* had left such an Odium upon their Community as could never be wiped off, and gathered such a Cloud about their Cause as would never permit it to shine. We shall freely grant, for Argument's sake, that these *German Baptists*, with many others, were uncommonly wild in their Opinions, and exceeding frantic in their Behaviour; but what then? Am I to act such a silly Part as to reject Infant Baptism, merely because all the *Papists* are *Pedo-Baptists*? Or shall I be so exceeding unreasonable in my Opposition to that Notion, as to accumulate the Ignorance and Idolatry of Popish Worship, the unchristian Cruelty of an intolerable Inquisition, and the monstrous Massacres and barbarous Bloodshed of that People, as so many unanswerable Objections against the Baptism of Children, purely because they practise that Ceremony? This Conduct might well be enrolled with *Munster Revels*, and registered among the Reveries of Fifth-Monarchy-Men. However, as it is not my Design to recriminate, but only my Duty to redress, shall dis-

miss the Objection as cruel, and unjust; and have only to add, that unless Believers Baptism can be proved contrary to CHRIST's Appointment, and the Apostolic Practice, we will remain unmoved, and our Cause unhurt amidst the most designing Objections, and artful Pretences: Which leads me,

III. To vindicate the Mode of Immersion.

This Part of the Controversy appears so plain and incontestable, from the Writings of the New Testament; that it is no less than amazing, any Lover of that Rule should so far miss the Mark, as to substitute Sprinkling in it's room. Nor is it less surprising that Multitudes, who allow Dipping to be the most primitive, scriptural, and significant Method, should act so contrary to divine Authority, and their own Convictions, as to admit a Practice so opposite; for, in my Judgment, the Change is as strange and unreasonable, as if the *Jews* had introduced the paring of Nails instead of Circumcision. But lest it

1 Kin. xx. should be said, *let not him that girdeth on his Harness boast himself as he that putteth it off*, I shall proceed to the Proof of this Point in the following Manner.

1. Dipping appears to be the true Mode, from the proper Import of the Word; for I believe it is allowed on all Hands, that Dipping is the most natural and primary Signification of the Word Baptism; then it will certainly follow, that we are on the safest Side of the Question: And I am apt to think, that in a strict and proper Sense, each Word has but one Meaning or Signification, and that every Application of it to another Purpose is metaphorical, not merely arbitrary, and always retains the Force of it's plainest and most obvious Sense. Yet should this be disputed, in a few equivocal Words, shall however venture to affirm, that the *Greek* Word for baptizing, in our LORD's Commission, is never in all the New Testament used to signify Sprinkling; nor is the original Word for Sprinkling ever used to express Baptizing. Therefore, as the Word RANTIZO is always translated to *sprinkle*, we have equal Authority to translate the Word BAPTIZO, to *dip*; for *Baptizing* is not the true rendering of the one, more than *Rantizing* would

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

55

would be of the other, the *Greek* Word being only *en-glist*; whilst to *dip* and *sprinkle* are the literal Translations of both. Consequently, when I say, Infant Baptism, it is merely out of Complaisance to Custom; for the proper Way of expressing it is Infant Sprinkling, or Infant Rantism.

2. From the baptizing Places mentioned in Scripture, it appears, that Immersion is the only proper Mode. *John's* Baptistery were the Rivers of *Jordan* and *Enon*, Mar. i. 5. because there was much Water there; and when *Philip* John iii. baptized the Eunuch, it was in a certain Water. This triple Testimony seems quite sufficient; a three-fold Acts viii. Cord not easily broken. Yet I am surprized to find that some have been so weak as to urge against the *Baptists* Practice of Dipping, "Such prodigious Numbers could hardly be baptized by immersing their whole Bodies under Water." * But it should be considered, that all Persons

* This extraordinary Surmise may be met with in Mr. WESLEY's Notes on *Matt.* iii. 6. with an Addition as strange as trifling: "It seems, therefore, that they stood in Ranks on the Edge of the River, and that *John* passing along before them, cast Water on their Heads or Faces, by which Means he might baptize many Thousands in a Day."

This Method of Baptizing, besides the antick, aukward Manner of it, is attended with many Inconveniencies; for as *John* could certainly be much more expeditious in Baptizing, than the People could be in Confessing, the Objection of Consequence, must be much stronger against Confession of Sin, than Baptism by Immersion. Nor does it appear that *John* baptized many Thousands at any one Time, during the whole Course of his Ministry. To suppose that he baptized many Thousands in one Day, unless it can be proved, that they properly and regularly confessed their Sins before, is a dishonourable Reflection upon the Baptist; for then there must have been as little Solemnity in their Confessions, as in this fantastical Manner of baptizing. Besides, had *John* practised this Method, those who never made any Confession at all, or were peremptorily forbid by him, might crowd among the Ranks, and receive the Ceremony without his Knowledge. But, after all, should our Author inflexibly adhere to this wild Sentiment, we must remain in Suspence about his real Meaning; when in another Place he allows,

Persons baptized by *John* confessed their Sins; and I am pretty positive, that I could baptize a great many in the time that one could make any tolerable Confession of Sin; therefore the Objection is merely fanciful, far from solid.

3. The Mode of Immersion is more visible still, from particular Actions before and after the Administration of Baptism. *When JESUS had been baptized in Jordan, he went straightway up out of the Water.* The Action of coming up out of the Water, strongly implies he was in it; and it is really amazing, that Men should so far trifle, as to suggest, the Phrase *baptized in Jordan*, implies no more than sprinkling a little Water on the Head or Face. For such an officious Criticism, in Opposition to the genuine Meaning of the Word, *Baptize*, is not only a gross Affront to common Sense, but at the same time a most dreadful Reproach upon the HOLY GHOST, for expressing the Act of Sprinkling in such a dark and doubtful Way, as if he intended to impose upon Mankind.

The History of the *Ethiopian Eunuch*, and his Baptism by *Philip*, is famous for our Purpose; for *they went down both into the Water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the Water, the SPIRIT of the LORD caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more.* It is exceeding remarkable, how minute and explicit the HOLY GHOST is in recording the Actions of going down into, and coming up out of the Water, placing the Act of Baptizing between their going down and coming up, and registering

“ That the antient Manner of baptizing was by Immersion.” See his Note on Rom. vi. 4. Upon the Whole, “ it seems, “ therefore,” he has left the Subject more dark and perplexed than he found it; and his Objection is evidently a mere Quibble, for want of a better Argument. Therefore, in my Opinion, it would have been more to his Honour, and done less Hurt to his Cause, had he rather been silent about it, than attempted to support it with such a ridiculous Conjecture, which can never be either a solid Foundation for Faith, or a sufficient Authority for Practice.

registering the Names of both the Persons, in order to ward off every Attempt against the Mode of Dipping, and leave not the most distant Apology for Sprinkling. *

4. The

* This Account of Baptism is so plain, and the Mode of Dipping so undeniable, that I was not a little surprized to see it so strangely perverted by the cloudy Paraphrase of a late Commentator: His Words are, "They both went down —out of the Chariot. It does not follow that he was baptized by Immersion. The Text neither affirms nor intimates any thing concerning it." See Mr. WESLEY's *Notes on the Place.*

This Author in his Preface declares, he has not *designedly misrepresented any Passage.* I shall not be so positive as himself, but greatly suspect he had not a good Design in treating the sacred Text in this Manner: For he could not be so elated with his own Abilities, or unacquainted with the common Capacities of Mankind, as to fancy he made an extraordinary Discovery, or persuade himself he informed the World, by opening the latent Mystery of *Philip* and the Eunuch's Removal out of the Chariot, in order to their going down into the Water for the Performance of Baptism. Nor can he be such a Stranger to the Rules of Speech, and the natural Meaning of Words, as to be quietly satisfied in his own Conscience, that the Phrase of *going down into the Water*, implies no more than barely *going out of the Chariot.* I am not altogether such a Stranger to his Ingenuity and Learning, as to admit either the Case; but rather imagine he wrote without due Precaution, or has an artful Reserve at the Bottom. As this Author is therefore famous for Serious Thoughts—Calm Considerations—Earnest Appeals—and Humble Addresses—perhaps when I have humbly addressed his Judgment, and earnestly appealed to his Conscience, and he seriously thought, and calmly considered, will find it difficult to slip away with Honour, or maintain his Ground with Success.

And 1. admitting this short Note fully to express his Meaning, then, in Conjunction with the Text, it will run thus —*They both went down, out of the Chariot, into the Water.* Is not this, at least, a strong Intimation, that the Eunuch was baptized by Immersion? 2. If Baptism by Immersion be neither affirmed nor intimated in this Passage, it is neither affirmed nor intimated in all the Bible; how then does our Author know that the "antient Custom was Immersion?" See his Note on Rom. vi. 4. 3. Is it not entirely unjust and unfair

4. The grand Events represented by, and held forth in Baptism, will admit of no other Mode but Dipping. The Flood of our SAVIOUR's Sufferings, and the Ocean of our REDEEMER's Agonies, are not only compared to a Baptism, but symbolically represented in that Ordinance; for it is easy to observe, whether Dipping or Sprinkling better expresses, and more fully figures forth the overwhelming Sorrows of the SON of GOD. When he was in the Wine-press of his FATHER's Wrath, his Language was as significant, as moving—*The Waters are come in unto my Soul: I sink in deep Mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep Waters, where the Floods overflow me.* This was not to be sprinkled with, but emerged in the Depth of Sufferings. And shall we either oppose or be ashamed of what is most emblematical of such substantial Truths? Besides, Baptism is also a lively Figure of the Burial and Resurrection of JESUS, together with our Implantation into his Death, and Resurrection to Newness of Life; but when Sprinkling is the Mode, there is not the least Reference to a Burial, nor the faintest Figure of a Resurrection.*

If

unfair to stop short in the midst of a Sentence, and put a Gloss upon it, when the Meaning cannot be expressed by a Part, nor the Design understood without the Whole? 4. Can this Writer disprove the analogical Antithesis in the Text, between *going down*, and *coming up*? And if not, the Meaning must either be, down into the Water, and up out of the Water; or else, down out of the Chariot, and up into the Chariot. To grant the first, overturns our Author's Scheme—to plead for the other, would be a daring Attempt.

* I have lately met with an Argument against Baptism by Immersion, as weak and inconclusive in itself, as to me it was new and uncommon. "Water Baptism cannot be by Immersion, to figure out the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of CHRIST, because the Substance is come; JESUS our LORD is risen. Now, to repeat the Sign, after the Substance is come, is a practical Denial of CHRIST being risen; but this they do who baptize by Immersion, to figure out the Resurrection; therefore, do
"prac-

If these Things do not, in the most absolute and undeniable Manner determine the Mode of Baptism, yet I am positive they are more in our Favour, than any Circumstance that can be produced on the other Side of the Question, and for that Reason am resolved to abide by Immersion.

It is objected, indeed, "that Dipping is very indecent, and extremely dangerous in most Cases and Countries; and therefore, as *all Things must be done decently, and in Order*, and GOD loves Mercy, rather than Sacrifice, we ought to practise Sprinkling, which is most safe and becoming."

But

"practically deny CHRIST to be risen." *Baptist against the Baptist*, p. 22.

I am at a Loss to devise, what Success the Author proposed to himself by this way of Reasoning, unless he thought every fanciful Flight, which struck his own Imagination, would pass for an Argument in the World; for if Mr. ELTRINGHAM do not already know, he may easily be informed, that the *Baptists* do not practise the Mode of Immersion, to figure out the Sufferings, Burial, and Resurrection of JESUS, as Things to come; but to bring to Remembrance Facts that are past: Nor is there any Impropriety in this, as he suggests, nor will it amount to a practical Denial of CHRIST's Resurrection, as he concludes. For who, that is such an *Oedipus* as Mr. ELTRINGHAM at forming a Syllogism, and unravelling Riddles, would be so weak as to infer, that the continued Repetition of Circumcision, after the *Jews* were in real Possession of *Canaan*, was a practical Denial of GOD's Covenant to give them that Land? Or affirm, that the repeated Celebration of the LORD's SUPPER is a practical Denial of the Death of JESUS, because in it they *shew the LORD's Death till he come*? The Ordinance of CHRIST's Body and Blood does not "respect his second
26. Cor. xi.
Coming," as our Objector asserts, but the Death of our REDEEMER until that Period. Therefore, if the LORD's SUPPER figure out the Death of CHRIST, without being a practical Denial of it, why may not Baptism refer both to his Death and Resurrection, without our being charged with a practical Denial of either?

But this rather appears to be a Charge upon the Wisdom of GOD, than an Objection against our Practice; for if the Appointment be Dipping, and we only keep close to the first Institution, observing all possible Caution and Decency, then the Blame of every Inconvenience must rest at his Door; but if Dipping be not the true Mode, then the chief Danger is in acting contrary to the Counsel of GOD. I am inclined to think, there was a great deal more Indecency and Danger attended the Ceremony of Circumcision than Baptism by Immersion; and the Wife of *Moses* seemed to be of the same Opinion, when

Exod. iv. she cried out, *Surely a bloody Husband art thou to me,*
 25, 26. *because of the Circumcision!* But far be it from me to measure the Ways of GOD, by my carnal Reason; or attempt to rectify the Wisdom of Heaven, by my foolish Suggestions. However, I am quite satisfied that Immersion is the only proper Mode; and as really persuaded, that it may be performed with the greatest Decency, and submitted to with the utmost Safety: We may strictly observe the one, and GOD will surely take Care of the other.

IV. We proceed to consider some of the Ends and Uses of the Ordinance.

Every wise and necessary Appointment, is calculated with a View to some noble Design, and intended to answer some valuable Purpose. The Institution of Baptism was undoubtedly for the Glory of GOD, and the Benefit of the Church; but it cannot be performed so much to the Honour of the one, or practised to the Advantage of the other, unless the Person concerned in the Administration, and the Subjects submitting to the Ordinance, be acquainted with the Way and Manner this is to be effected.

I am of Opinion, that some have affixed Ends and Uses to Baptism, that have no Relation to it, and were never designed by our LORD; and as really persuaded, that others have incautiously neglected this important Part of the Subject, in their Discourses upon, and Debates about the Ordinance; for could this Point once be settled,

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

61

settled, we would have a Key to open the Controversy, and obtain Light into the Argument. But the Question is, Whether I can adjust this Affair in Agreement with the Scriptures, and to the Satisfaction of Enquirers? That I have Capacity to open it effectually, shall not be asserted; nor that others are without Prejudice to receive it cordially, taken for granted; yet believe the Word of GOD is not so silent, nor the Nature of the Thing so ambiguous, as that it cannot be done. This is not advanced, so much with a View to make any fall in with my Dictates, as with a Design to engage the Attention of all to a serious Scripture Enquiry.

And 1. In Baptism, the Subjects personally declare, their Attachment to JESUS; publicly profess Obedience to his Authority; manifest their Dependence on the Power and Fulness, and practically preach the Will of their LORD.

And all this is no more than what is plainly expressed in the New Testament, and inseparably connected with the Nature of the Ordinance. The Method therefore which *Paul* took to regulate the *Corinthian* Converts, which arose from, and were fomented by a pertinacious Attachment to some peculiar Favourites, and an unreasonable Dislike to others, was by pressing his Reproof, and enforcing his Appeal with the following Inquiries—*Is CHRIST divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the Name of Paul?* The last of which ^{13.} evidently implies, that had they been baptized in the Name of *Paul*, they would have had a rational Pretence for adhering to him; therefore, whenever Persons are baptized in the Name of CHRIST, there is not only in their Design a declared, but in *Paul's* Esteem an allowed Allegiance to JESUS. And whoever cheerfully submits to the Laws, Manners or Customs of any Prince or State, approves of the legislative Authority, and complies with the Power of the Prince; in like Manner, the proper Authority of our SAVIOUR is allowed of, and his peremptory Command complied with, in the Baptismal Obedience of a Believer. For, as our glorious REDEEMER is invested with all Power in Heaven and in Earth, he sways the Scepter of uncontrollable Authority,

rity, and commands with absolute Power. In Consequence, as his grand Commission is to teach and baptize all Nations; so the Administration of Baptism by the Teacher, and Submission to it by the Taught, is not only a manifest Allowance of CHRIST's legal Authority, but an avowed Declaration of a strong Attachment to the royal Institutor. Besides, whoever observes the Injunctions of his Prince, and puts himself under the Protection of his Governor, with a comfortable Confidence in his Fidelity, excellently expresses the firm Trust and full Dependence he has in the Power, Promise, and Liberality of his Sovereign: And as JESUS has engaged his Presence to the End of the World, (not barely in the Time of administering Baptism, but through the whole Observance of whatever he has commanded) so those Persons who, from a feeling Sense of his Love, and a peculiar Delight in his Presence, submit to Baptism, as a Token of their Veneration and Respect for all other Appointments; declare their Confidence in CHRIST, as in one faithful, able, and willing to make good every Purpose, and fulfil every Promise. And besides, as CHRIST did not only enjoin Baptism to be observed by others, but also practised it himself; so a Believer, by copying the Example of his SAVIOUR, shews to all around him, that he is not ashamed to follow his

2 Pet. i. 3. LORD, nor backward to work the Will of him *who hath called him to Glory and Virtue.*

Mat. xi.
27.
John xv.
15.

In short, the Observance of Baptism, is an open Declaration of a fixed Faith in CHRIST JESUS, and an entire Devotion of the Subject to the Service of the TRIUNE GOD. In this solemn Ordinance, we assert CHRIST to be our Prophet, that hath taught us the Things concerning the Kingdom of GOD—Our Priest, who hath made an Atonement for us—And our King, who is to rule, govern, and defend us; otherwise our Submission is only a blind Obedience; for the FATHER and his Ways are only known to such as have a Revelation of both from the SON.—If JESUS is not our Priest, our Performance would neither be a reasonable Service, nor the offering up of a spiritual Sacrifice, acceptable to GOD by CHRIST JESUS; for he is the Altar that sanctifies the Gift—And if he is not our King, why

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

63

why are we subject to his Laws? In this holy Institution, we profess to claim GOD for our Father, Husband, and Friend. Our Father—who hath made ample Provision, and now prepared us for, and granted free Admittance to the Childrens Bread. Our Husband—in whom we possess all Things, and are now brought home to enter upon the Enjoyment. Our Friend—with whom we take sweet Counsel, and in Fellowship with whom we have great Delight. In Baptism we declare, that we are washed with the Washing of Regeneration, and enlivened by the Renewing of the HOLY GHOST; for they must be clean, who come into the Sanctuary of GOD; and alive, before they can walk in his Commandments blameless. Moreover, in this Ordinance we profess to believe with all our Hearts, that the LORD is our Portion, his People our People, and his Ways our Ways; therefore, with all our Souls, we devote ourselves wholly to GOD, for this weighty Reason—we are not our own, but bought with a Price; also with a firm Resolution—to observe whatsoever he hath commanded; and with this important Prayer—that he would enable us to spend the Residue of our Days to his Honour and Glory.

2. Another End and Use of the Ordinance is, that the Subjects humbly wait by Faith, for more of the sweet Enjoyment of these rich Blessings, which are held forth to them in Baptism, as in a lively Figure, or bright Perspective Glass.

For if our Minds be exercised, and Faith employed, during the Administration of this significant Solemnity, we cannot but be impressed with the Remembrance of the bitter Baptism of our SAVIOUR's salutary Sufferings, when he was immersed in Sin, overwhelmed in Wrath, and plunged in the Depth of Agonies for us, Thus while we are indulged with Soul-reviving Views of our FATHER's Love, and Heart-affecting Prospects of our SAVIOUR's Sufferings, we cannot but long and pray for the HOLY GHOST to lead us into green Pastures, and beside the still Waters; so that we may drink deeper into the Love of JESUS, and behold his Beauty through the Windows, while he shews his Glory through the Lattices. This being granted, in Baptism we view

Psal. xxiii.

Song ii. 9.

the Death of our Surety making Atonement for our Sins—his Grave, in which all our Guilt is buried—and his Resurrection, whereby we enjoy Justification of Life. In this figurative Fountain, we behold the Streams of Grace, *proceeding out of the Throne of GOD and the LAMB*, and flowing into our Souls, in Virtue of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of JESUS; and are led by Faith to see a Death to Sin in our intellectual Powers; the Old Man buried, and the New Man in CHRIST rising to Holiness of Life—We have a Prospect of the Baptism of Sufferings, to which we are called as Pilgrims of JESUS: Nor does this grieve or disturb our Spirits, while we behold *the eternal GOD our Refuge*, and his *everlasting Arms* our Support. If we have not yet received, we are encouraged to wait for that sealing Evidence of the HOLY GHOST, which every Saint is to look for, and expect after believing—The entire bathing of our Bodies in Water, represents the bathing of our Souls in the Blood of the LAMB—In going down into the Water, we have a lively Sense of our Implantation into CHRIST, and of sinking deeper into the Love of GOD, which flows from the Fulness of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST—In passing through the Element, we have a sweet Symbol of our Translation out of the Kingdom of Darkness, into the Kingdom of GOD's dear SON—In coming up out of the Water, we have the joyful Prospect of a complete Deliverance from all Sin and Sorrow; together with a triumphant Resurrection from the Grave of Corruption, and an abundant Entrance into the Kingdom of Bliss and Glory. Finally, whatever is necessary to qualify a Sinner for Communion with GOD in his House below, is represented in Baptism; as whatever is necessary to qualify a Saint for Communion with GOD in his House above, is represented in the LORD'S SUPPER. They are outward and visible Signs of the true and real Substance, and cannot possibly be of the least Advantage to any Soul, further than Faith is concerned, and the Understanding employed to behold the Glory signified. Thus while we rejoice in the Blessing, and feed thereon ourselves, we profess to others our Confidence in, and Devotedness to the great THREE-ONE.

At present I cannot apprehend any other End or Use of Baptism, but what is included in, or connected with one or other of these Particulars. However, I do not assert these are all, or affirm there is no other; only conclude, that if the above mentioned are allowed to be express and pertinent, they effectually exclude all Infants from any Pretence to Baptism. For as the Whole is a spiritual Performance; in the Fear of JESUS, a practical Declaration of Faith and Trust in the MESSIAH, a personal Devotion of Soul and Body to GOD, and a voluntary Engagement to walk in Newness of Life, no Infant can be supposed to have any Concern in these Transactions. I proceed,

V. To produce some Motives to engage to a Compliance such as are born from above.

I believe we are all agreed in this, that if GOD designed Baptism to be administered to Believers only, then the Application of it to Infants must be the Invention of Men: But if GOD intended Infants should be Subjects also, then the confining it to Adult Believers, is a bold and sinful curtailing of the Mind and Will of the LORD. Before I proceed, therefore, permit me to put the following Question to my Readers, Which Side of the Argument do you take? If you are fixed in your Judgments about the Truth of Believers Baptism, and quite determined to conform, Matters are come to an Issue betwixt you and me; but if you are still undetermined, or violently stiff on the opposite Side, though it is probable you will not hesitate so much, or keep me in Suspence so long, as the People to whom CHRIST put a similar Question, yet am very positive you cannot avoid the same Dilemma; for should you declare for the Divine Right of Infant Baptism, you must be hard set to maintain your Ground, seeing the Scriptures afford neither Precept nor Precedent in your Favour. But should you own Believers Baptism to be of GOD, and still neglect the Practice, your Brethren will not only be ready to stone you for the Confession, but how can you account for your own Conduct, in rejecting what GOD has enjoined? And should your Answer be, You cannot tell; then

Matt. xxi.
25, 26, 27.

then be it observed, that the Spring and Foundation of such Ignorance, must be either a supine and slothful Temper, or a careless and indifferent Disposition; a State of Mind so base, that it seems incompatible with the Christian Character, and stands abhorred by every generous Soul. Therefore, as Baptism is fully revealed, and critically distinguished by the Word of GOD, this should suggest the Necessity of searching the Scriptures: And, as many are convinced of the Truth of the Doctrine, but backward in complying with their Convictions, the Motives that follow are intended to excite such to break through every Temptation, Snare, and Slander, and pursue their Duty with Chearfulness, Courage, and Resolution.

And 1. When GOD is pleased to favour any Soul
 Tit. iii. 5. with the *Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST*, it is not only with a Design to prepare them for the Enjoyment of himself, but on purpose also to dispose them to *walk in his Statutes, keep his Ordinances, and do them*. Therefore, if thou art joined to the LORD by one Spirit, and blessed with the Removal of a rocky Heart, it is expected, and commanded, that thou should not only now and then observe, but invariably walk in the Statutes of GOD—not pick and choose, according to thy own Fancy; nor give up and neglect, merely to gratify the Humours of others, but keep, maintain, and defend every Ordinance of Heaven—nor, must thou barely defend their Authority, and maintain their Purity, but observe them with Strictness, and practise them with a Reverence becoming their Solemnity: And it is exceeding remarkable, that after JESUS CHRIST had delivered a most seasonable Exhortation, given the greatest Encouragement, and made the most suitable Promise to labouring, heavy laden Sinners, he adds—*Take my Yoke upon you*. The Method therefore observed by our LORD in this Subject, is both delightful and exemplary; he does not employ them to make Brick without Straw, indulge them in Idleness, or decoy them into his Service with deceitful Charms; he first invites them to himself, to give them Rest and Strength; then commands to take upon them the Yoke of his Ordinances; and lastly informs them,

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

67

them, that they must bear the Burden of Trials and Afflictions for his Sake. But when Souls have obtained Rest and Peace in him, his *Yoke is easy and his Burden is light*. Baptism is a Part of CHRIST's Yoke, and Submission to it is often attended with a Burden of Reproach and Opposition; beware therefore of rejecting the Yoke, on purpose to avoid the Burden.

2. It is probable you have a true Veneration for what we commonly call the *LORD's Prayer*, and a strict Regard for every Petition, then we shall fix upon two, and enquire whether you can repeat them in Faith—*Thy Kingdom come—thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*. Matt. vi. 10. These Words are vastly solemn and significant, important and comprehensive: But, my Friends, tho' your Lips may adopt the Words, and frequently repeat the Petitions, can your Hearts desire the Accomplishment, while your Practice is so contradictory? For if Believers Baptism be an Ordinance of the Kingdom, and the Observation thereof a doing the Will of GOD; how can you pray for the Coming, or Prosperity of GOD's Kingdom, and still oppose it by a slothful Neglect of it's holy Institutions? And how dare you appeal to your FATHER, that his Will may be done, seeing *you know his Will, and do it not?* O when shall your Hearts, Lips, and Lives agree!

3. Baptism is not only among the *All Things*, but one of the first of All that we are commanded to teach, and you observe: Are you therefore so far taught already, as to admit it a Truth, but still so negligent as not to practise it? We must next teach, and do you observe, that the *Servant who knows his Master's Will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes*. Luke xii. 47. Should the Servants of Men behave in this Manner to their fellow Worms, their Conduct would not only be disagreeable, but intolerable; and shall the HOLY ONE of *Israel* dispense with that which sinful Dust abhors!

4. Are you convinced of the Truth, but neglect your Duty? Then consider how you trifle with sacred Things, and *reject the Counsel of GOD against yourselves*. For if Luke vii. 30. Baptism be Part of the Counsel of GOD, and a Re-
jection

jection thereof condemned by the MOST HIGH, then the Consequence of your Conduct may be hurtful to yourselves, and the Frowns of your FATHER hard to bear. *If a Despiser of the Law of Moses died without Mercy, what a fearful Thing must it be to slight the Appointments of JESUS? I dare not take upon me to say, how far CHRIST's corrective Resentment may be exercised upon those, who deny him out of Fear, and betray his Cause for Shame; but shall venture to aver, that such Persons are not yet determined to follow their REDEEMER through good and bad Report; and shall make free therefore to put you in mind, that your LORD hath declared, and they are awful Sayings, He that is ashamed of me and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his FATHER, with the holy Angels.*

Heb. x. 28,
29, 30, 31.

Mar. viii.
38.

Luke i. 6.

5. The HOLY GHOST hath given a noble Testimony of the Faith and Practice of *Zacharias and Elisabeth: They were both righteous before GOD, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the LORD blameless.* But your careless Conduct deserves another Character: You profess indeed to be cloathed with the Raiment of your elder Brother, and expect to stand compleat and blameless before the Bar of GOD; but why will you not walk before him in Righteousness, and observe his Ordinances in a strict and becoming Manner? You are far from being blameless in this Respect; for you are Blame-worthy before GOD, condemned by his Word, despised by every ingenuous Mind, and accused by your own Consciences: Therefore have a just Regard for all the Commandments of the LORD, punctually obey his Word, act consistent with yourselves, and carefully comply with your Convictions. This is the Way to enjoy your FATHER's Presence here, and not to be ashamed before him hereafter.

6. You have the Word of GOD in your Favour, and the Example of CHRIST for your Encouragement; and as the Dictates of Truth are so copious and unreserved, concerning the Doctrine of Believers Baptism, and the Pattern of JESUS so weighty and important

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

69

tant in this Affair, it should excite all who are in Doubt about this Matter, to a careful Search, and those who are already convinced, to a chearful Obedience. And I am quite satisfied, that all who reverence the Word, and love the SAVIOUR, will require no more to determine their Judgments, and regulate their Practice, but the Authority of Scripture, and the Example of CHRIST. *

Motives might be multiplied, but these are quite sufficient to acquit my own Conscience, and leave you altogether inexcusable. However, I am fully persuaded, that it is only the distinguishing *Love* of GOD that can Jer. xxxi. draw you to Obedience, and the overcoming *Power* of 3. JESUS that can engage you to a chearful Compliance; Psal. cx. 3. and therefore let no Man mistake my Meaning, or abuse my Design; for though I press home the Matter as weighty, and exhort to the Practice, as truly important, yet I neither make a SAVIOUR of the Ordinance, nor drag People to the Duty with the Cords of legal Life. For, in my Opinion, no Person is a proper Subject of Baptism till he is born again, and blessed with the Knowledge of Salvation; and am inclined to think, no Soul can perform it to the Glory of GOD, and his own Advantage, until he can look upon it as a free and instructive Privilege, and not esteem it a dull and heavy Task. It is therefore my constant Method, to preach Privilege as founded in the boundless Fulness, and flowing from the Soul's Relation to the SAVIOUR; and enforce Obedience, as arising from the uncontrollable Authority, and positive Command of Zion's KING. This I produce as a Key to unfold my Meaning, and present as an Apology for the Use of such Words as *Obligation, Duty, Compliance, Submission, &c.* shall therefore conclude with a few Inferences.

* What I have frequently urged, from the Consideration of CHRIST's Command and Example, is expressed with equal Elegance and Propriety, by one of my favourite Authors—"Let our Passions rise and fall; take this Course or that; as his Word determines, as his holy Example guides." HERVEY's *Reflections on a Flower-garden.*

K.

And

And 1. As there is but One Baptism, it highly concerns all that have drank into One Spirit, are blessed with One Faith, and thereby Children of One Father, to enquire with Diligence, and pray with Fervency, in order to be established in the Doctrine and Practice of this One Thing. To call it indifferent, is a daring Reflection on the Wisdom of GOD—To pronounce it doubtful, a slothful Slander upon his Word—And to be mistaken about it, quite inexcusable. The Ordinance is a most solemn Affair, and the Scriptures speak plain about it; therefore, if we are uninformed, the Ignorance is owing to our own Indifference. Some indeed are easily satisfied, indolently disposed, and equally unreasonable to suggest, “That such a Number of great and good Men, as have appeared Apologists for Infant Baptism, in all Ages, can hardly be suspected of Mistake; and if they are in an Error, it is unlikely we should arrive at the Truth; and so had better be satisfied with our present Sentiment, than disturb our Minds to no Purpose.”

This pitiful Pretence, which I have heard from the Mouths of many, is little better than a gross Infatuation, and no other than an old Popish Plea; because their chief Reason for embracing the grossest Legendaries, and their best Apology for practising the basest Idolatries, is no other than the prevailing Opinion of Infallibility residing in the Pope, and Council that enjoin them. But as we are not to follow the best of Men further than they follow CHRIST, so in whatever we take them for our Pattern, we ought to be satisfied whether in that Matter they be *Followers of GOD as dear Children*. I esteem it safest to copy the more infallible Example of JESUS and his Apostles, and in this I believe we are agreed: Then search and try, and if you discover a plain Precedent in your Favour, you have gained the Point, the Cause is determined, and our Restraint is a Dream; but if, after the closest Search into the Word of GOD, Infant Baptism should remain a real Uncertainty, hope it will then be granted that our Method is the purest Practice, the ONE BAPTISM.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

71

2. You that are to be baptized, permit me to speak freely: Has your Choice been Matter of Conscience and Concern? Have you weighed the Cause in the Ballance of the Sanctuary? Are your Views purely for the Glory of GOD, the Vindication of his Cause, and the Benefit of your own Souls? Have you counted the Cost of a publick Pilgrimage? And are you *strong in the LORD*, Eph. vi. and determined to *walk up and down in his Name*? Be-10. ware of lurking Self, sinful Singularity, and a poisonous Zech. x. Party Spirit. All these eat as doth a Canker, and con-12. sume like a Moth. Beware of dry Formality, a dead Profession, and a mere Name to live; for these are only *Refuges of Lies*, Fetters of Delusion, and Masks of Hy-Isa. xxviii. pocriety. *The overflowing Scourge will sweep them away*, 17, 18. and the Day of the LORD burn them Root and Branch. To-Mal. iv. 1. day, even To-day you are to make a solemn Appearance, and come forth in a publick Profession before GOD, Angels, and Men; beware of lusting in the Wilderness, turning back to *Egypt*, or distrusting GOD in a barren Land. You may probably meet with Opposition from Men, undergo the Buffetings of Satan, and feel the Faintings of Flesh and Blood; but *consider him who en-Heb. xii. 3. dured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in your Minds*. I remember, that immediately after our LORD was baptized, *he was Matt. iv. 1. led up of the SPIRIT into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil*; this was likewise my Lot, and it may also be yours: Beware therefore of proceeding in your own Strength, and take heed that you be not daunted with slavish Fears, and so lose entertaining Views, and be deprived of rich Enjoyments in going through the Ordinance. You are now to *go forth without the Camp*, Heb. xiii. *bearing CHRIST's Reproach*; O keep looking unto him 13. *who is the Author and Finisher of your Faith*; *who for Heb. xii. 2. the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of GOD*.

3. I shall sum up the Subject with a Word to all. In the Introduction to this Discourse, I took Notice of some of the Signs of the Times in a general Way; and shall now farther observe, that while they make a gloomy Ap-

pearance, wear an awful Aspect, and seem to advance with Threats of Desolation, at the same time they sound
 Luke xiii. a solemn Warning—*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise*
 3—5. *perish*; and administer a deep Rebuke to the Children
 Jer. xxiii. of Men—*For by Reason of Sin the Land mourneth.*
 10.

Isa. lxii. 6. As a *Watchman upon the Walls of Jerusalem*, permit
 and lviii. 1. me to *lift up my Voice like a Trumpet, cry aloud, and not*
spare, and faithfully deliver the Message of Importance.
 But as Sin is so universal, visible, and barefaced, need
 not spend Time in proving the Nations guilty: And as
 the Judgments of GOD speak out so plain, need not
 forewarn you of Danger; shall therefore direct you to
 the City of Refuge, the Habitation of Rest, and the
 Rock of Safety. Listen then, O ye Isles! be attentive,
 O ye People! I bring not the Tidings of Terror, fore-
 tel not the Changes of an Age, nor proclaim the Deli-
 verance of a Day; but publish, freely publish the joy-
 ful News of Gospel Gladness, blow the Jubilee Trum-
 pet, and *preach the acceptable Year of the LORD*. Hear
 Luke iv. then ye Wicked, who are *sold under Sin*, and consigned
 19. to Condemnation as Rebels against GOD; in such a
 Rom. vii. Case, Treasures of Gold will be no Ransom, Tears of
 14. Blood make no Atonement, the Wisdom of Men a slender
 Safeguard, and military Bravery a mean Defence.
 O ye careless ones, who reject the kindest Admonitions,
 and *sit in the Seat of the Scorners*, deaf to all Reproof;
 Psa. i. 1. how long will you scoff at serious Matters, and mock at
 Rev. xxii. the most awful Doom? *He that is filthy, let him be fil-*
 11. *thy still*, may be sealed in Court To-day—*Depart from*
 Matt. xxv. *me ye Cursed*, may be pronounced at the Bar To-morrow,
 11. and then *Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible*
 Psa. xi. 6. *Tempest*, will be the Portion of your Cup for ever. But
 I forbear—it is not my Prerogative to sound Damnation
 through the World, but to make a mild Appearance
 with the Branch of Peace; therefore to you, who are
 touched with Remorse, pierced with the Arrows of the
 ALMIGHTY, and longing for the Love of the LAMB,
 Psa. lxxxv. *bear ye the Word of the LORD—Surely his Salvation is*
 10, 11, *nigh them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our*
 2, 13. *Land. Mercy and Truth are met together: Righteousness*
and Peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out
of the Earth; and Righteousness shall look down from
 Heaven:

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

73

Heaven: Yea the LORD shall give that which is good, and our Land shall yield her Increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the Way of his Steps. These Words contain a joyful Sound, and blessed are they Ps. lxxxix. that know it; they bring near Salvation, and publish 15. Righteousness, founded upon the Harmony of the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES. And all this arises from the *Ransom found*, namely, the Sacrifice of JESUS, and the 24. Atonement made by the Blood of the LAMB. This is He, whose prevailing Arm can *save to the uttermost*, Heb. vii. and *pluck even Brands out of the Fire*; whose complete 25. Righteousness is a Garment of Praise, and whose powerful Spirit is the Author of Life. Lift up your Heads 2. then, O ye Mourners, and fear not, neither be discouraged; for *he whose goings forth were of old, from everlasting, hath made a Way for the Ransomed of the LORD to pass over.* He who came from Edom, with *dyed Garments from Bozrah*, can send you forth by the *Blood of the Covenant, out of the Pit wherein is no Water*; therefore, *turn ye to the Strong Hold, ye Prisoners of Hope.* The Captain of Salvation, who was made *perfect through sufferings*, is now returned victorious Heb. ii. 10. from the Field of Battle, having obtained Deliverance for his lawful Captives; and *he that was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore.* In Consequence of this, we are commissioned to proclaim the Riches of Redemption, and sound forth the Sweets of Salvation; for JESUS CHRIST is become a *hiding Place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Tempest*; as *Rivers of 2. Water in a dry Place, and as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land.* Here then is Safety for Souls who see their Danger, Supply for such as are in Want, and Refreshment for such as are weary: Come therefore ye that are seeking in Sorrow, and waiting with Grief; for *GOD hath devised Means to bring home his Banished*, 2 Sam. xiv. *that they be not always expelled from him.* This is what 13, 14. many can bear witness to, who were some time ago the chief of Sinners, and as *Sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.* Let such 1 Pet. ii. 25. also bear what *GOD the LORD doth say: He will speak Peace unto his People, and to his Saints, but let them not turn again to Folly.* My Fellow Pilgrims, here is not your Rest; in the World ye shall have Tribulation. It

- is possible you may have a heavy Burden and a hot Day; your Temptations may be many, and your Trials great; but *be of good Cheer, CHRIST has overcome the World,* and bruised the Head of the Serpent, and you shall be more than Conquerors through him who hath loved you. The Afflictions that are past are left behind, the Grace of CHRIST can make the present easy, and what is to come is a Secret with the LORD; but *as your Days, so shall your Strength be.* Lift up your Heads therefore with Joy, for your complete Redemption is already nearer than when you first believed. In a little time, having washed your Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the LAMB, you shall stand upon Mount Zion, see the Glory of the LORD, enjoy the Felicity of his Chosen, and for ever remain where Grief and Sorrow shall be known no more.
- John xvi. 33.
- Deut. xxxiii. 25.

Then let your Songs abound,
And ev'ry Tear be dry;
You're marching thro' IMMANUEL's Ground
To fairer Worlds on high.

Dr. WATTS.

The End of the SECOND SERMON.



APPENDIX.



CHRISTIANITY is a Divine Revelation, not only calculated for the best Purposes, namely, the Glory of GOD, the Encouragement of Sinners, and the Consolation of *Israel*; but is in all Respects strictly consistent and truly important; nor can it be otherwise, seeing GOD is its Author, Object, and End. Therefore, if our religious Principles exactly coincide with the Holy Scriptures, we need not scruple to declare them; and if at any Time they appear contrary to that only Rule, let us not be ashamed to renounce them.

In the foregoing Sermons I have spoke my Mind pretty freely, respecting the Mode and Subjects of Baptism; but having been some time ago of a different Judgment, shall, for the Benefit of my Readers, give a brief Account of the Beginning of my Scruples about the Validity of Infant Baptism—My Exercise of Mind during the Inquiry—the Opposition I met with when determined—and the Manner of my becoming acquainted with, and joining the *Baptists*.

I was

I was born in the North of *England*, and educated in the *Presbyterian* Persuasion, in which I was not more strict than uncharitable, esteeming that Church the purest upon Earth, and concluding all other Denominations in a dark and unsafe State. But when Intrusions * became frequent in *Scotland*, I determined to look more narrowly into the Constitution of the Church; and after as close and impartial a Search, as my Opportunities and Prejudices would at that Time admit, could not help thinking the *Independent* Government most agreeable to the Nature of New Testament Worship. But though this Conviction did not terminate in a Resolution to break off from my own Community, yet it took down the Fire Edge of a narrow, bigotted Spirit, and produced a more generous Turn of Mind towards good People of all Persuasions, which, blessed be GOD, to this Day hath never been contracted, but more and more enlarged.

In 1752, being at the *Latin* School in *Jedburgh*, a little Market Town in the South of *Scotland*, where it was customary for two or three of the most advanced Classes to repeat Part of Mr. VINCENT's Catechism every *Monday* Morning, the Answer to the following Question fell to my Lot;

“ What is signified, sealed, and engaged on GOD's
“ Part, by our being baptized in his Name?

“ There is signified, sealed, and engaged on GOD's
“ Part, by our being baptized in his Name, 1. His ingrafting us into CHRIST. 2. His making us Partners of the Benefits of the New Covenant.”

Early on the LORD's-DAY Morning, as I was walking in the Fields, considering the Repetition the Master had assigned the Day before, in order to fix it in my Memory, which was my usual Method, this Answer struck me with some Degree of Surprise, and led me to reason upon it in the following Manner:—If ingrafting

* That is, when a Minister is imposed upon the People, contrary to their Inclinations, by the Patron of the Parish.

APPENDIX.

77

ing into CHRIST, and ensuring a Title to the Benefits of the New Covenant, be signified, sealed, and engaged on GOD's Part, by our being baptized in his Name; how comes it to pass that Numbers who have been baptized in the Name of the HOLY TRINITY, to all outward Appearance, live and die without an Interest in these distinguishing Blessings; for GOD will surely fulfil every Engagement to which he sets his Seal?

It was quite natural for me to draw such a Conclusion, because, prior to this, the LORD had enabled my Soul to cast the Anchor of it's Hope in the Fullness and Faithfulness of himself, and in the sure and unchangeable Nature of the Covenant of Grace; and that in the midst of a high Storm of deep Distress, for want of the Knowledge of an Interest in CHRIST, *the one* Luke x, *Thing needful*. At first, I only suspected the Author's 42. Doctrine, with regard to the Faithfulness of GOD, and the Stability of his Covenant; but considering what he farther observes of the Engagement on our Part, began to question, whether he did not mistake the Nature and End of Baptism. His Words are:

“ By our being baptized in the Name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, is sealed and engaged on our Part, that we will be the LORD's, and that 1. wholly, Soul and Body, and with all our Powers, Faculties, and Members, are to be employed by him as Instruments of Righteousness and new Obedience; and 2. only the LORD's, and therefore we engage to renounce the Service of the Devil, and the Flesh, and the World, and fight under CHRIST's Banner against these Enemies of the LORD and of our Souls.”

Poring upon these Things, and reviewing all that VINCENT says upon the Subject, found it asserted—
“ That the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, which by Baptism we are made Partakers of, are, Admission into the Visible Church—Remission of Sins by CHRIST's Blood—Regeneration and Sanctification by CHRIST's SPIRIT—Adoption, together with our Union unto CHRIST—and Resurrection to everlasting Life.” I observed, the *Westminster Assembly*,

L

sembly, in the Larger Catechism, strictly concurred with these Sentiments, and therefore concluded they must be true. But then I could not account how these Benefits were conferred upon Infants by Baptism, seeing I had experienced those rich Blessings flowing to my Soul through a different Channel, namely, by the Operation of the *HOLY SPIRIT in the Day of the MESSIAH's* Power. For having seen myself *without GOD, and without Hope in the World*, received the Knowledge of *Salvation by the Remission of Sins*, and obtained Faith to *cry Abba Father*, above Twenty Years after my Baptism, concluded these Favours were never bestowed that Way. This put me upon enquiring, whether it was possible for me to receive any Benefit by Baptism, while an Infant; or whether I could make a profitable Improvement of it now? That hitherto it had been of no Advantage to me, was quite evident; for I had never closely considered the true Nature and Import of the Ordinance, and to reap Benefit by Reflection, seemed a little impracticable; because, being incapable of spiritual Views, and personal Engagements at the Time, there appeared nothing material to reflect upon relative to a Transaction, in which I was never consciously engaged; therefore often thought, had I not been baptized before, how sweet and significant the Ordinance might be now! For I could go to my Minister, as our SAVIOUR did to *John*, present myself a Subject, and rejoice in him that sanctified the Water——And here begun my Scruples concerning the Validity of Infant Baptism.

The Method I took to have my Doubts removed, was more strictly to search into what VINCENT, together with the *Confession of Faith*, and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* say upon the Subject; but these fell so far short of yielding the Satisfaction wished for, they did not fail to increase my Difficulties; many Things appearing not only inconclusive, but directly opposite to Scripture, Reason, and Experience. For, “the Visible Church is said to consist of such as profess the true Religion, together with their Children;” and yet they only allow Infants to be admitted by Baptism. This I could by no Means reconcile; for if they are a Part of the Visible Church, prior to their Baptism, it would be a flat Contradiction to

Confess.
of Faith,
Chap. 25.

say, they enter into it by that Ceremony; and it was equally difficult for me to understand, how an Infant by Baptism, "enters into an open and professed Engage-
ment to be wholly and only the LORD's;" or ac-
count how a Child's "Faith, with all other Graces, can
be strengthened and increased," seeing Children have nei-
ther Faith nor Grace in the Judgment of the Assembly;
as is clear from the tenth Chapter of the *Confession of Faith*, and the Question on *Effectual Calling*, in the *Larger Catechism*. For all are declared to be in a State of Sin and Death, till effectually called by the Word and Spirit of GOD.

I had frequently heard, and as often condemned the Church of *England* for affirming, that an "Infant is made a Member of CHRIST, a Child of GOD, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven by Baptism;" but now found that our own Church, in Effect, said the very same: For the *Shorter Catechism*, in the Description of a Sacrament, defines it—"An holy Ordinance, instituted by CHRIST, wherein, by sensible Signs, CHRIST and the Benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to Believers."

The plain and obvious Meaning of these Words appeared to me in this Light, that CHRIST and the Benefits of the New Covenant were represented, sealed, and applied to Believers, by the sensible Signs in Baptism and the LORD's Supper; but then, as we used Baptism in Infancy, I was at a great Loss to know in what Sense Infants could be termed Believers; nor have I ever received Satisfaction in this Point. At length, considering there is no other outward and sensible Sign in Baptism, but pure Water, which not being again applied when the Soul is blessed with divine Faith, concluded, either the Definition did not respect Baptism, or intended, that those Benefits were conferred upon Infants by the outward Element, which is rather more exceptionable, than what we so freely condemned in our Sister Church, and to me a glaring Proof of our own Inconsistency; for, elsewhere we are said, "to be made Partakers of the Redemption purchased by CHRIST, by the effectual Application of it to us by his HOLY SPIRIT."

Shorter
Cate-
chism.

"SPIRIT." And this is said to be done, "by working Faith in us, and thereby uniting us to CHRIST in our effectual Calling." If we are made Partakers of these Benefits, by the sensible Sign in Baptism, then not by the SPIRIT of CHRIST in our effectual Calling; but if by the Word and SPIRIT of CHRIST in effectual Calling, then not by the sensible Sign in Baptism. This can never be reconciled. Thus what I had formerly esteemed our Constitutional Standard, at last involved me in the greatest Difficulties: For, whatever might be the Intention of the Compilers, the natural Consequence of their Words argue—That either Infants are to be considered Believers, the Water applied afresh when Faith is obtained, or the Ordinance to be deferred, till the Subjects are born from above.

Upon this, the Exercises of my Mind began to be weighty; but remembering how useful the reading of Rom. viii. the Scriptures had been, while I was *groaning for Redemption, and waiting for the Manifestation of the Sons of GOD*, resolved to enquire into the New Testament with the greatest Diligence and Impartiality. The Method I took was to read it over and over, and carefully remark every Passage, which directly or implicitly regarded the Ordinance. And for about a Quarter of a Year, every fresh Perusal produced new Evidences against Infant Baptism; but tho' many Places bore upon my Mind with some Degree of Conviction, yet three more particularly determined my Judgment. And,

John iv.
23.

1. *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the FATHER in Spirit and in Truth: for the FATHER seeketh such to worship him.*

From these Words I conceived, that the true and proper Worship of the New Testament, is to be performed in Spirit and in Truth; and as I looked upon Baptism to be a solemn Part of that Worship, concluded therefore, that Infants could not engage in it with their own Spirits, nor practise the Ordinance in Truth, under the Influences of the SPIRIT of CHRIST; consequently must be improper Subjects of Baptism.

2. *Without*

2. *Without Faith it is impossible to please GOD.* Heb. xi.6.

As I could not apprehend that the Parents, or Sureties could believe for the Child; neither could I learn, how the Infant could have Faith for itself, because *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD*; 17. therefore, as an Infant cannot have Faith, and it is impossible to please GOD without it, the Baptism of Infants cannot be right; because, *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin.* Rom. xiv. 23.

3. *The like Figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards GOD) by the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

It appeared to me, from these Words, that the Subjects of Baptism must have the *Answer of a good Conscience towards GOD*; which I understood, not only to be an *Heart sprinkled from an Evil Conscience*, but also a full Persuasion, that the Ordinance was appointed by GOD, to figure forth a finished Salvation by the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST; but as Infants cannot have such a conscious Impression, concluded, they were very improper Subjects of Baptism.

Being now pretty well satisfied, that Believers were the most proper Subjects of Baptism, I proceeded to examine the Mode. The Texts produced by VINCENT, and the Assembly of Divines, to prove Dipping unnecessary, and that Sprinkling is sufficient, are so foreign to the Purpose, that I immediately concluded the Cause must be dark, where the Proofs were so weak. My Suspence therefore about this Matter did not long continue; for as we generally allowed Dipping to have been the primitive Mode, I judged a Departure from that Practice unwarrantable; and as it agrees with the most natural, significant, and expressive Import of the Word, it was safest, and quite justifiable to abide by that Custom.

The next Thing that came before me, was a strong Inclination to be acquainted with some of the other Principles,

ciples, of such as practised Adult Baptism by Immersion. But when I came to examine the Word in various Dictionaries, which distinguishes that Persuasion, found the poor *Anabaptists* traduced as a Sect of Hereticks, who generally held a System of monstrous Opinions. This gave me a great Damp at first setting out; but, after some reasoning upon the Subject, concluded, their erroneous Sentiments in other Points, did not prove them mistaken respecting Baptism. And in a short Time, I met with a more favourable Account of the *English Baptists* in PARDON'S Dictionary, namely, "That they differ from other Protestants in little more than the not baptizing Children, as appears by a Confession of Faith, published by the Representatives of above one hundred of their Congregations, in 1689."

This Account gave great Relief to my Mind, and did not more rejoice than surprize, by the mention of such a Number of Churches in *England*. Nor did it fail to set me a longing for a Sight of this Confession of Faith, or any other *Baptist* Book on the particular Subject, which denominates that Profession. The first that I could obtain was Mr. WILSON'S *Scripture-Manual*, a Treatise quite seasonable, which added great Strength to my Mind, and Support to my new Sentiment; for that Book, in my Esteem, is as concise, clear, and conclusive as any I have yet seen upon the Subject.

After this, my Inclination for the Ordinance, and Acquaintance with the People, called *Baptists*, greatly increased; and as our School always broke up for the Harvest, resolved, when I returned to my Father's in *England*, to visit some of the *Baptist* Congregations. But after considering the Opposition I was likely to meet with, became much discouraged. However, I wrote to my Father, informing him of my Change of Principles, and gave a distant Hint of my Intentions: This being about the latter End of the Spring, thought we would have some Time to reason the Point at a Distance; but soon found that my Letter had kindled such a Fire of Resentment, as would be hard for me to endure at my Return; therefore conceived it would be best to dismiss, or at least conceal my new Opinion. But it was im-

practicable

practicable to palliate what I had already mentioned, without manifest Dissimulation, therefore wished it might appear that my new Sentiment was really an Error, and my Compliance so far merely a Temptation. This led me to review the Point, with some Degree of Resolution, being determined, if possible, to have full Satisfaction: But one Morning, my Mind was so strangely affected, that all the Powers thereof were shaken and confounded, as I was reading these Words, *because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved; GOD shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie; that they all might be damned, who believe not the Truth.* The Manner in which this Scripture operated, was, in producing a Suspence about my happy State; for I was tempted to believe, that I had not received the Love of GOD in Truth, which had occasioned him to send this strong Delusion, in causing me to believe such a Lie, respecting Baptism. And as it was only about half a Year before, that I had obtained the Witness of Peace and Pardon, it bore the weightier upon my Mind. For some Time, therefore, I looked on Baptism as an indifferent Matter; and all Thoughts respecting it being dismissed, the whole Bent of my Desires were engaged in earnest Addresses to GOD, for a fresh and full Evidence of my Interest in CHRIST; which, best of Blessings, he soon granted, to the unspeakable Joy of my Heart. I then formed a Resolution, to disturb my Peace no more with perplexing Thoughts on Baptism; but rest satisfied with the sweet Assurance of CHRIST's Love. However, Convictions respecting the Solemnity of that Institution, and the Light I had received into the Subject perpetually pursued me: And though several times I had come to a Determination, to remain entirely satisfied with the Baptism I had received in my Infancy, let the Effect be what it would, was at length sufficiently roused from this indolent Indifferency by these Words, *He that knows his LORD's Will, and does not act according to it, shall be beaten with many Stripes:—And he that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* Having therefore made as critical a Search into the New Testament, as my Capacity would admit, and not being able to discover the most distant Hint from Precept or Precedent,

2Thess.ii.
10,11,12.

Matt.x.37.

cedent, in favour of Infant Baptism, concluded, had that Practice been the Will of GOD, it's divine Authority would never have been left so exceeding dark and obscure. And besides, it did not only appear quite unscriptural, but, in the very Nature of the Thing, vastly absurd; for every Branch of New Testament Worship is to be performed in Faith, in Spirit, and in Truth; and Baptism is undoubtedly as solemn a Part of that Worship, as any other Christian Duty, or Ordinance; consequently, it is most irrational to suppose, that Infants have any Concern in holy Baptism. But though my Mind was now relieved from all it's Scruples, respecting the Truth of Believers Baptism, yet how I should withstand the Opposition of my Friends, still remained a distressing Difficulty. I continued therefore in this disturbed Way till near the Harvest, when it was evident either GOD or Man must be obeyed; but I determined to comply with my Convictions, and leave the Issue with the LORD. What greatly encouraged me in this, was a deep Sense of what CHRIST had done for me, and wrought in me, together with a firm Belief of the Account to be given before him in a little Time. I returned therefore to *England*, with earnest Desires for Acquaintance with the *Baptists*, and fully resolved, by the Grace of GOD, to put my Designs into Practice; but my Fears were great, and my Reasonings many—thinking it a hard Matter to expose myself to the severe Resentment of those whom I so dearly loved and regarded—and fearing lest the Principles and Practices of the *Baptists* might prove disagreeable to me, or I unacceptable to them. But having heard, before I left *Scotland*, that an intimate Friend* of mine had joined himself to a *Baptist* Church, a little South from *Hexham*, purposed first to see him, from whom I expected a full Account of the People. At our Interview, among other Things, he told me he was to be at a Church Meeting the *Saturday* sevensnight following; for it was but seldom he could go, as he lived at a great Distance from the Place,

* This was one ROBERT HALL, who is now a Minister at *Arnsby* in *Leicestershire*, and Brother to Mr. CHRISTOPHER HALL, the *Baptist* Minister in *Whitehaven*,

APPENDIX.

85

Place: I promised to meet him there, if my Father's Permission could be obtained.

It is somewhat remarkable, that after I opened my Mind fully, my Mother never appeared against me; nor did my eldest Brother, of whom I was much afraid, ever speak to me upon the Subject. My Father, together with an Uncle, were the only Relatives who appeared irreconcilable. However, I accomplished the Promise made to my Friend, by concealing my Intentions as much as possible.

I got to the Place,* on the Evening appointed, and found Mr. HALL was not come; however, the Kindness of the People did abundantly compensate for that Disappointment; for, contrary to all Expectation, I was immediately admitted into their Church Meeting, and, to my great Satisfaction, found there were two Persons to be baptized the same Evening: This put me in mind, how providentially *Abraham's* Servant had been conducted; Gen.xxiv. and as my Prayers were, in some Respects, correspondent 12. with his, hoped I might meet with the same Success; Ver. 27. and having never before heard any relate the Dealings of GOD with their Souls, it was a moving Meeting to me. The Church declared their Approbation of the Candidates, and desired them to prepare for Baptism; one of whom stood up, and made a most affecting Request—intreating all present to pray for a Blessing upon the Occasion—that by Grace they might be enabled to walk agreeable to the Gospel—and at last finish their Course in Joy and Triumph. This so melted my Heart, as it had never been before at any other Part of Worship; nor could I help reflecting within myself—What a dead,

* It is called *Juniper-Dye-House*, about four Miles South of *Hexham*, in what is vulgarly distinguished by the Name of *Hexhamshire*. The Practice of this Church, is to meet on the *Saturday* before they receive the Lord's Supper, which is once in two Months; not only to settle their Church Affairs, in outward Matters, and hear such as propose themselves for Baptism; but to enquire whether a Love to CHRIST and one another prevails, and to pray for the Presence of GOD in the Solemnity before them. A Practice truly laudable and Praise-worthy!

M

formal,

formal, unmeaning Thing, is the presenting of an Infant for Baptism, when compared with this! And, besides, the Minister's * Discourse at the River Side, together with his Prayer before and after the Administration, were so powerful and pertinent, that I secretly wished all my Acquaintances present.

Acts xxii.
16.

Acts viii.
36.

When the Solemnity was over, one asked me what I thought of their Method; and being inclined to oppose it for some Time, to see what they had to say for their Practice, was surprized to find them advance the same Arguments against me, which had formerly determined my Judgment, when far from every *Baptist*. I had resolved with myself, not to join them suddenly; but the clear Views and sweet Enjoyments my Soul had been indulged with, during the Administration of the Ordinance, the Information received from ROBERT HALL, and the pressing Sound of these Words, *Why tarriest thou?* produced another way of thinking; and so I opened my Mind. It was somewhat particular, that all the while I could hardly forbear crying out, *What doth binder me to be baptized?*

The next Morning another Person came early, with an Intent to be baptized, which gave me a fair Opportunity to embrace what I had so earnestly longed for; and our Proposals proving acceptable, were accordingly baptized. The Relation of our Experiences took up much of the Morning, so that the People were all assembled for the Worship of the Day, and standing along each Side of the River, the Occasion reminded me of the primitive Baptisms in *Jordan*.

Isa. xxv. 6. Betwixt the Administration of this Ordinance and the LORD'S SUPPER, Mr. FERNIE preached twice from these Words, *In this Mountain shall the LORD of Hosts make unto all People, a Feast of fat Things, a Feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat Things full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined;* after which all Things were made ready for the Celebration of the Holy Supper; and the Persons newly baptized, standing up in the Presence

* Mr. DAVID FERNIE, the Pastor of that Church.

Presence of the People, were addressed by the Minister to the following Purpose: "That as we had made a very publick and solemn Profession, it was necessary to lay before us, that our Conversation ought to be holy and becoming—that the Difficulties of a publick Pilgrimage were many and great—and that the Faithfulness and Fulness of JESUS was amply sufficient to support and supply." And then assuring us what Joy we administered to them, and with what cordial Affection they received us, in the Name of the Church he gave us *the Right Hand of Fellowship*. The Whole was Gal. ii. 9. conducted with so much Order and Simplicity, and attended with such a remarkable Blessing, as I had never been Witness to before: And as it was a feasting Season to my Soul, so I stood in great Need of it; for I met with a cool Reception at my Return home. And now began my Wilderness Trials, being looked upon as one who had renounced the Faith, and turned Fool in a Frolick.

One Time, late at Night, my Father asked me seriously, if I was really baptized, or whether the Report was groundless? I told him, it was all Truth; upon which he grew exceeding angry, desired me to leave his House, and be seen by him no more. I quietly walked out to lament my hard Fate; but considering our SAVIOUR's Temptations immediately after his Baptism, I was led to put up a Petition to this Purpose: "O LORD, many perplexed Cases have been put into thy Hands, and thou hast brought Order out of them all, I refer this Matter, with every other Affair, wholly to thy Disposal, over-rule all for thy own Glory, and my Advantage." After my Father was gone to Bed, my Mother called me in, and the next Morning his Countenance was more towards me than at other times. This made me conclude, the LORD was beginning to answer my Prayer; and so it came to pass; for in a short time, a beloved Cousin* was made the

M 2

happy

* This was a young Man, the Son of my Uncle already mentioned. They were Men of great Abilities, strict Piety, and died near to one another, soon after.

happy Instrument of turning my Father's Heart; which put an End to all my Troubles from that Quarter.

Returning again to *Scotland*, I designed to conceal my Sentiments from Friends in that Place, imagining, to speak of them might rather be hurtful than otherwise. But in less than half a Year, some Person hearing the Matter, at *Newcastle upon Tyne*, all came to Light. My Friends in *Jedburgh* seemed to vent themselves in Surprise, but not by way of Spleen and Resentment; therefore had nothing to undergo here, only what some would call the Shame and Scandal of the Thing. And, indeed, the renouncing of my Baptismal Covenant (as they called it) was looked upon to be a strange Piece of Conduct, an Instance whereof had not been known, in these Parts, in the Memory of Man. But to give a full Detail would be quite tedious, shall therefore leave the candid Reader to judge, what I must have undergone in a Course of such Variety of Exercises.

To subjoin an Account of my Call to the Ministry, would probably be acceptable to some; but am apprehensive it would be judged an Impropriety by others; for which Reason choose to decline it; and shall content myself, at this Time, with hinting, that when I first began to preach, the Storm of Opposition run higher than ever; but Providence directing my Course to *Dublin*, about four Years ago, put an End to the Strife of Tongues on that Subject, though I cannot say all Exercises of a similar Nature were left behind; for my entering in, even here, was attended with much Contrariety. I confess, indeed, my own unguarded Conduct, and indigested Zeal, might, in some Respects, occasion many Things, which were otherwise avoidable. However, I now see these Trials were all necessary, and hope they have been useful, to the humbling of my Spirit, and tending to make me more watchful for the future.

I shall therefore conclude, by informing the Reader, that all the Exercise of Mind I underwent, and the Opposition I met with, were not to be compared with the Peace and Tranquillity of Soul I enjoyed, by complying with
my

APPENDIX.

89

my Convictions, and following the SHEPHERD's Voice : Nor have I ever repented, but often rejoiced, for the Change of my Principles ; and have now ventured to appear in the Defence of Believers Baptism. Whatever therefore may have been the Turns or Troubles, the Falls or Foibles of my Life and Conduct hitherto—O that the Residue of my Days may be so directed by the WORD, and influenced by the SPIRIT of the LORD, that my Conversation may be both useful and ornamental to the Cause of CHRIST in general, and the BAPTIST Profession in Particular.

THE END.





THE END

O
T
P
P
This
th
c
Rea
o
Infe
The
v
re
The
v
5
The
P
Som
n

CONTENTS.

THINGS necessary to be believed, concerning the Kingdom of GOD, previous to Baptism, from Page 5 to Page 9.

Things necessary to be believed, concerning the Name of JESUS CHRIST, antecedent to Baptism, from p. 9 to p. 12.

Reasons why Infants are improper Subjects of Baptism, from p. 12 to p. 26.

Inferences, from p. 26 to p. 31.

The principal Arguments alledged in Favour of Infant Baptism, examined and refuted, from p. 39 to p. 50.

The most plausible Objections against Believers Baptism answered, from p. 50 to p. 54.

The Mode of Immersion vindicated, from p. 54 to p. 60.

Some of the Ends and Uses of the Ordinance, from p. 60 to p. 65.

Motives

C O N T E N T S.

Motives to engage to a Compliance such as
are born from above, from p. 65 to p. 70.

Inferences, from p. 70 to p. 74.

The AUTHOR's first Scruples about the Va-
lidity of Infant Baptism—His Exercise of
Mind during the Inquiry—The Opposi-
tion he met with, when determined—
And the Manner of his becoming ac-
quainted with, and joining the *Baptists*
from p. 75 to the End.



uch as
p. 70.

ne Va
cife o
ppofi
ned—
ing ac
ptists